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no such expressions as these, "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, bid the Patriarchs, or bid Israel, or the children of Israel to do so and so." Nothing of the kind. Nor could it be in the very nature of things. Because all the transactions recorded in the book had passed a considerable number of years before the writer was born: therefore he could take no part in the transactions recorded. This I mention with pleasure, as an important truth. No prejudices derived from the supposed character of the writer can be urged with the least propriety.

I would again take notice of a similar circumstance; which, if it be not, yet ought to be as thoroughly understood. There is not one single instance in the whole book of Genesis, wherein God ever speaks to any one, saying, "Go, speak to such a one—command such an one." No, not one. No one person is ever employed to carry a message, or instructions, or commands from God to others. Moses was the first person that was ever called to this important and arduous task, accompanied with so many difficulties, as are
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at all times sufficient to press down the soul with grief and anxiety.

I now open to you the true reason why Moses expostulated with God upon this matter, when he was sent to the people of Israel. He never heard of such a thing. He had no conception of such a thing. I grant, indeed, that Moses considered himself early in life as ordained of God to rescue the people of Israel out of Egypt. And when he slew the Egyptian, as it is expressed in the seventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, he thought they would have understood that God meant to deliver them by his hand. So he did. But Moses never dreamed of being employed to carry a message, either to Pharaoh, or to the elders of Israel. It was altogether unprecedented. Read the account at your leisure—compare it with the contents of this book. Suffer me to make a remark upon it, which I consider of very great moment. Two thousand four hundred years elapsed, before God ever employed any man to carry a message from him to other men. And yet there was religion in the world during all this space of time.

time. God was worshipped—God was feared—God was trusted—God was honoured. My friends, through this whole duration, I defy any man to say, and bring a proof of his saying, that religion was the invention of priests, together with the collusion of oracles, and to be considered as the tricks of that class of men. No such thing can be affirmed. No one instance can be adduced. No circumstance of the kind can be laid hold of. Religion sprang up in the world, or, if you prefer the expression, was introduced into the world, under the common government and providence of God; without force, without effort. All we can say of the matter, *it is* there. And in this book we have the first rudiments of religion as practised among the Gentile nations, through the various scenes of idolatry. I do not speak as to the objects of worship, but as to the rites themselves. We have no examples of a combination to force men to be holy and good against their inclinations. No; what God chose to communicate during this lengthened period of time, was to individuals; and it concerned the individuals themselves; and seldom went farther than

than to their children and descendants; and to them only as a matter of choice and of approbation. I say again, it is all clamour, it is all false representation, which has so often beguiled the minds of uninstructed persons, that the priests were the inventors of religion, and of the worship of God. You may see for yourselves. You may examine for yourselves upon this occasion. And it is worth your while to do so. But again :

In no one part of this book does the sacred penman ever attempt to introduce any evidence, any direct proof of the truth of what he says. Indeed, it would have been absurd. I am not, my brethren, talking paradoxes. The evidences arose out of the very contents of the book. And you will forgive me when I assert, that the facts recorded in this book, were as well known, for the most part, to the whole world, as they were to the writer. It would have been foreign to his purpose, therefore, to have introduced evidences, and to have urged them in form. It could have answered no end. Perhaps I may be considered as singular in this assertion. I shall here

here then more immediately enter into the general proofs. And you will give me leave thus to reason—That Noah, and his three sons, must have obtained exact and decisive information with respect to what happened at the commencement of things—at the commencement of this world—at the commencement of human life—Under the first state of mankind, they were the most competent to report the occurrences in the world before the flood; at least, to give a general representation of them, without entering into a detail of particulars. They knew what they said when they asserted the necessity of sacrifices—of a divine worship—when they recorded the testimonies of approbation from God. They knew what they said when they gave a representation of the manners and characters of leading men before the flood—of the commencement and progress of arts, which are particularly mentioned. Noah himself was a striking example of this kind of knowledge; and his sons could not be destitute of the same knowledge. Methuselah was contemporary with Adam for several hundred years, and died not long before the flood. Therefore, I say again,

again, Noah and his sons were undoubtedly competent to judge of the facts which they handed down to their posterity, and which are recorded in the book of Genesis. Perhaps this will be admitted, and the rather, that we are not supposed to have so much concern in the transactions of men before the flood as in those which followed it. But with respect to this point, I am of another mind. However, I accept of the concession—greater attention *may* perhaps be due to the transactions which followed the flood, among the descendants of Noah. Then I must reason in this manner. Fix upon individual persons, and take specific dates. I would observe, that according to the order of narration in this book, Shem and his descendants lived together in the upper part of Mesopotamia, near those districts which run up to Armenia, and to those tracts which are at no great distance from where the ark rested; for such is the description of the places specified in the history, if we trace them as we should. And it is clear that the patriarchs were very attentive to all those incidents which led their minds to the coming of the promised seed;

and which made a grand and capital figure in the progress of mankind. God said to Noah, "I, even I, do cut off the world with a flood; but my covenant will I establish with thee." What covenant? He had made none with Noah. He had made no promise to Noah at that time of any covenant—he had entered into no agreement with the patriarch. No other covenant or promise could be understood than this, "that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent." That covenant must fail, if all mankind were cut off—that covenant must stand, if Noah and his sons were saved. Hence we see that Noah himself propagated among his sons the expectation of this great blessing. And even in the tenth chapter of Genesis, particular notice is taken of Shem, as the father of all the children of Edom—of those that were more immediately interested in the covenant.

Now, I suppose, that these holy patriarchs lived together for a considerable time—came not into the plains of Shinar, nor into the borders of Babylon, nor had any thing to do with that extraordinary undertaking; and that they

they continued together till the days of Abraham.

• Here then, I must again observe; Abraham was born three hundred and fifty-two years after the flood. He lived seventy years among his own kindred and ancestors. He then left his kindred and his country, and went into a land he knew not where, which God was to point out to him, and which he afterwards found. He trusted the promise that a numerous offspring should descend from him, though as yet he had no child; and that such a particular country should be assigned to that offspring, by the righteous governor of the world, and be blessed with his more particular and special presence. In connexion with this we must consider the history of Abraham. Isaac was born four hundred and fifty-two years after the flood. Here we must fix our dates. Noah died three hundred and fifty years after the flood; that is, only two years before the birth of Abraham. Shem died five hundred and two years after the flood; that is, about the fifty-third year of Isaac. Eber died five hundred and thirty-

one years after the flood; about the eighty-fourth year of the age of Isaac, and the twenty-fourth of Jacob, and Esau; so long was the life of that patriarch extended, to nearly ten years after the death of Abraham; and he lived some hundreds of years along with Shem, and therefore was competent, as a witness; and was eighty years contemporary with Isaac; and there can be no doubt that they must have had many interviews, from a variety of circumstances which might be mentioned.

Now then, I say, with respect to the particulars related in the book of Genesis, subsequent to the flood, they may be stated thus: As to the persons between that period and Moses, Eber lived * * * and Moses himself * * * I know of no records respecting the affairs of Europe that can pretend to such transactions as these do.

But I observe farther; if things were so minutely observed, on account of the length

* Mr. Fell's statement of the facts is for ever lost.

of

of their age, in the family of Shem ; they were not less so among the descendants of Ham, nor among the descendants of Japhet. In all their various collateral branches, even to * * * * which were the descendants of Shem's second son. And we find, that the descendants of Shem particularly were eminent for marking events. Thus Eber called his son Peleg, " because in his days " the earth was divided," which was an hundred and one years after the flood. There must be the same kind of knowledge among all other nations as among the descendants of Abraham, as intimate and as exact. It would have been in vain for Moses to have attempted any deception. Here he could not have succeeded, but must have been detected at once. The very Egyptians would have been the first to have done it, who descended from Ham, by his son Mizraim, and who perhaps might think themselves marked out in an unfriendly manner, and excluded from a share in that promise, which made a great and extensive
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But I would still farther observe upon this head; that I have no reason to suppose that the ancient patriarchs did not keep records, or that there were no writings in those days, I believe that writing was made use of long before the days of Moses. Moses himself glances at a common practice, that of writing upon stones; and commands Joshua after he should be dead, and the people should have crossed the Jordan, to erect an heap of stones, and upon them to write certain laws. For my own part, I suppose there were engravings upon the heap of stones, set up to denote the covenant made between Laban and Jacob; and I am disposed to think, that the pillar which Jacob anointed had an inscription upon it, at least, this word, BETHEL, the house of God; and that from hence arose the custom among the Phenicians of erecting pillars, which they called * * * * a very little variation from the term Bethel. All these things clearly prove, that Moses could have no thought of deceiving. He had no visible end in view. It could answer no purpose to him. It could make no alteration with respect to preceding events. And he was well aware of the exact know-

knowledge which the rest of the world had of the facts he recorded. And he has given us frequent intimations that he wrote under a consciousness that others understood the Scriptures as well as himself. I will produce some instances. "Tubal Cain's sister was named Naamah." This is all that is said. It has afforded ground for various conjectures among learned men, none of which are worth mentioning. Her history was well known—all the peculiarities of her character were understood in those times. It was needless for Moses to say more, and it might be proper to observe so much; for we find he is never fond of deviating into subjects which are not interesting in themselves, and which afford no advantage with respect to future times. We have the same things said after the flood. Speaking of Nimrod; "Therefore," it is said, "Nimrod was a mighty hunter before the Lord." This was given as a proverb. The circumstances of his character, pointed out by the proverb, were then well known—all nations understood the things thus intimated. More was not necessary. Moses wrote under an extensive knowledge of

the times. Indeed, the same thing occurs with respect to the history of Abraham himself, at least of Sarah. It is supposed, that Sarah is a name by which she was known in Ur of the Chaldees, among her ancestors; and which glanced undoubtedly at some peculiar circumstances of her history. More was not requisite. There are, as I think, in the thirty-sixth chapter of Genesis, two very remarkable instances where Moses writes in a full consciousness how well the men of his times, understood the history of the facts which he was recording, "This is that Anah which found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father." We understand not these things, but they were undoubtedly well known in those times. Some read the passage now quoted, "he found mules;" thus, "This is that Anah who found hot-baths, or warm springs in the wilderness;" or "This is that Anah who found giants in the wilderness, and of himself cut them off." Or again, "This is that Anah who found the plant Jemma." What this plant was—what were its excellent properties, as they are not indi-

indicated, who can tell? And yet I am inclined to suppose, that this is nearest to the true sense of the passage. The thing was well understood in those times. At the close of the same chapter, speaking of the kings who reigned in Edom, he says, "Baal-Hanan died, and Hadar reigned in his stead, and his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred." Who those persons were we cannot tell. She must have been of a renowned character, else she would not thus have been mentioned. Her character was then well known, and therefore farther particulars are not given.

I mention these things only to show that Moses wrote with a consciousness how well-informed the world was, with respect to the things which he delivered. Now give me leave to bring these matters home. I have already asked, could not Noah and his sons give a sufficient and authentic account with respect to the transactions before the flood? Could not Noah and his descendants give as exact an account of the transactions that followed the flood? Moses in the tenth of Genesis,

nefis, has marked out the limits of every nation then in the known world; limits which continue to this day; and which have been pointed out by great and eminent men. Any nation would have corrected him had he been mistaken. Many nations would have rejoiced to have done it, had he committed any error. Could they not inform us, that at such a time the earth was divided, when Eber called the name of his son, "Peleg, for" in his days was the earth divided." By the division of the earth I understand the allotments of the different parts of the then known world among the descendants of Shem. By the division of the earth, I do not understand the dispersion at the building of Babel; that was another thing; and I suppose, could not be less than above an hundred years after the former. The earth is spoken of as very distinct and different. Could not they tell as well as Moses, and Moses as well as they, who were the founders of such and such cities, and such states; who were the law-givers of such states; what was the commencement of history in such countries? These were things in which the whole world was concerned.

These

These things bear some relation to our own capacities as rational beings; nor should we think of charging Moses with absurdity, of which he was never guilty,

I will now take notice of a few things with respect to religion. Was Moses the inventor of offering the firstlings of the flock, and the fat thereof to God? No; this was practised before the flood. Was Moses the person who first drew the line between beasts clean and unclean; and birds clean and unclean? No; God himself enumerates them in general to Noah, previously to his entering into the ark. Was Moses the author of erecting altars? No; the first we ever read of was set up by Noah. Was it Moses who forbade the eating of blood? No; it was handed down to him in a regular progression through the posterity of Noah. Was Moses the author of consecrating such and such things to God, by pouring out oil and otherwise? No; Jacob set the example when he consecrated a place to God with oil, and called it Beth-el. Was Moses the author of the custom of paying tythes? No; Abraham gave tythes of the spoil to Melchisedech.

Jacob

Jacob vowed the tenth of all that he should acquire to God; and he laid the foundation of that custom. Was Moses the inventor of the distinctions which respected marriage, and were they peculiar to that dispensation? No; they were found and practised among the Pagans. Was Moses the inventor of that odious rite, and so very singular in itself, circumcision? No; it was practised by several nations before the birth of Moses. Why then should Moses be loaded with all the supposed religious absurdities that can be collected together?

Now I call upon the advocates of natural religion to ascertain what they mean by natural religion. Whether or not does it include the offering of sacrifice? The ancient heathen connected sacrifices with religion. They made that a part of natural religion, and attributed the practice to the instruction of their gods. It does not belong to Jews particularly, it does not belong to Christians particularly, to account for these things. It belongs to men of all nations, to men of all persuasions. Then let us not deceive ourselves.

Now

Now I wish to state the objection as fairly as it lies in my power. I will suppose it to run in some such manner as this. Perhaps, sir, what you have said with respect to the commencement of religion, kingdoms, arts, sciences, &c. even down through the lives of the patriarchs themselves, may be true.

But some one will say, "What say you to this? Here is an odd circumstance,—such a man as Abraham, pretending to divine communications, taking it into his head to leave his country and kindred, supposing that God would give him some land he knew not where."

Now I would speak, my friends, with all honesty upon this head. So far as I know myself, and the modes of reasoning I have been accustomed to in private investigation; it is most likely I should have said, that Abraham was a man of a singular turn of mind—there was something odd in his head, and peculiar to the family. I doubt not that the world thought so. He and Lot both
left

left their country in quest of a foreign land, where they proposed only to dwell as strangers and sojourners; vainly hoping, I would say, that God would put their posterity into the possession of it. And they kept up this idle pretence for about four hundred years. I should have said, had I lived in those days, "It is a strange affair." And perhaps should have admired the conduct of Pharaoh, who received with so much calmness Jacob's answer to a simple question, "How old art thou?" "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty, and I have not yet attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers." Perhaps I should have said, Pharaoh acted like a gentleman. He respected Joseph, and took no farther notice—he knew the man and his family, and was well acquainted with all the descendants of Heber; both those who lived in the east, from whence Balaam came; as well as those few wanderers who straggled about the land of Canaan. He passed the matter by as a gentleman. Probably I might have thought in this manner. But what should I have done in the
issue,

issue, had God given me the life of Methuselah, and I had lived to see all the power of heaven awake to bring the people out of Egypt—to lead them and to feed them in desert and barren lands; and at length, give reality to all their dreams, by putting them into the possession of the land they so often spake of. This issue, my brethren, forbids me to treat any part of their history with ridicule or contempt. The facts are before you. Reason upon them as much as you please. I will grant all your reasoning. If nothing be fallacious, then there must be a foundation for it.

But I have another circumstance to open, and with it I shall draw to a conclusion. It is this. I have taken notice of the prediction that “the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent.” This must at last terminate in some particular family. We see how reserved Scripture is on the subject. No mention of it is made before the flood: nor is it limited to any nation. Nor till three hundred years and more after the flood was it first intimated to Abraham, who doubtless bore

bore the reproach, and his son and grandson bore the reproach, as did their descendants, of appropriating it to themselves: which made the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews look back when he uttered that expressive sentence, “Wherefore God was not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city.” Now tell me how this could have been done in a gentler way. Abraham, while he talks about his communications from God; and the covenant God had entered into with him;—forced not other men to receive his religion. He did not come pretending messages from God to other men; never once. I repeat it, never once. Hence we see all open, all clear, all without effort; and we can assign no other reason for such events than the immediate interposition of a divine Providence; otherwise they could never have reached our ears, much less have been left upon record.

But I would observe farther, this led the way, by degrees, to other great and interesting changes. Disputes arose among the heads of the holy families themselves, on
account

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account of the promised seed. Hence the enmity between the Moabites and the descendants of Jacob ; between the Amorites and the descendants of Jacob ; between the Edomites, the offspring of Esau, and the descendants of Jacob ; between the Ishmaelites and the descendants of Jacob. They all maintained their share in this promise, and were not willing to be excluded. Do not you perceive how this operated in keeping up the most decisive evidences in support of the truth ? Their mutual jealousies forced them all to be faithful in their records, and in what they published to the world. Let us discuss these things in the light of divine truth, and see the hand of God through all ; and attend to the openings of true Religion through these events. I consider myself as having only entered upon its surface. I conclude with a short improvement.

First, We see clearly that religion was not the invention of men—not originally forced upon the world by any human art—that it carries all the marks of divine authority. And is it nothing to alledge in its support,

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that

that even false religions, through all their corruptions, as found among the gentile nations, are to be traced from the first traditions hence derived, and handed down to their posterity. True religion is not obliged to account for those corruptions, which are the result of human passions. By no means. The nations ceased to be so exact in their records after the people of Israel came out of Egypt. And we see this circumstance affected all the patriarchs. It naturally begat silence, where they could not refute; and hence we may trace out a variety of other occurrences in the world.

Further, I hope, my young friends, you will perceive the necessity of reading, of sifting the word of God—of trying it—of bringing it to the light of your own minds—of doing the same justice to it that you would to other books—of examining without prejudice. It is a great misfortune when men sit down, particularly to the sacred Scriptures, not with any view to be convinced, but if possible to find something through which to attack those holy books. Let all such things

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things be removed from your minds. May you find the seed of the woman to your everlasting happiness. Through him may you discern the destruction of death, and the discovery of an immortal life. Through him, may you be enabled to collect all the times, in their various and nice dependencies, which run through the whole of the sacred Scriptures till they terminate in the New Testament! May light open gradually upon your understandings, as it did upon the world with respect to those great and wonderful things. While you are zealous to maintain the truth of the Scriptures, put this question to yourselves, "What advantage is it to me if the
" Scriptures be true? What objects do I propose by maintaining their authority? Have I
" any interest at stake?" Ah, my friends! the greatest interest: That interest, without which your very beings could not be a blessing: That interest, without which all your hopes must be swept away: That interest, without which every thing beyond the grave must be awful and horrid darkness, while we are in the present state: An interest which, if lost,

we are robbed of every comfort—of every consolation—of every joy—of every peace.—May you find, and bind it to your hearts, and live for ever in the sight of God! Amen.

This was Mr. Fell's solemn farewell to the world.

LECT. V.

LUKE I. 1—4.

Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word:

It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.

THERE are subjects of which a man may be innocently ignorant; and there are others with which he must be acquainted at his peril. Every one is not obliged to be a mathematician, nor to cultivate a taste for music, for painting, or for poetry. Many are born with a total incapacity to acquire

those sciences, as some are born blind, some deaf and dumb. But an indispensable necessity is laid on all men to study, to know, and to practise morals and religion, and all are endowed with the capacity of attaining proficiency in these. In some cases a vague, partial, defective knowledge may serve the turn; and there may be, and frequently is, very accurate and extensive knowledge, laid up, like so much useless treasure, to be only occasionally displayed and reckoned over, but never turned to any good account. But in matters of duty toward God, our fellow-creatures, and ourselves, knowledge must be clear and distinct, and it must have a constant and a commanding influence upon the heart and life. Morality and religion are in their nature so closely interwoven, that every attempt at separation, aims at destroying the whole texture. Morality is the well-organized body, and religion the quickening spirit. Morality is religion brought down to the perception of sense, and religion is morality sublimated into pure intellect. Nevertheless what God has thus intimately joined together, man is too frequently endeavouring, with impious hand,

hand, to tear asunder; and the effort ever did, and ever will, produce infinite mischief. A religion without morality formerly kindled fires in Smithfield, and burnt the bodies of men to ashes for harmless, often for well-founded, opinions. A morality which affects to supersede religion is a well-constructed time-piece from which the main-spring has been withdrawn, or which hastens to a state of rest for want of being wound up. It contracts the period of human existence, it narrows the sphere of human usefulness, it diminishes the sum of human happiness.

We assume it, therefore, as an axiom, a primary, self-evident truth, that to such a being as man, a moral rectitude, animated by a religious principle, is of essential importance. He may want, or he may lose an arm or an eye; he may be slow of speech, dull in apprehension, of cold affections, have an unretentive memory, yet still be a man, and good, and happy; but withhold or extinguish the principle of conscience, and the *man* is annihilated.

But where are we to search for this precious treasure, destitute of which man is poor indeed? "Where shall this wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding? The depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof:"—"It is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to Heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."

Every man *has* this treasure, *is* this treasure, in himself. To unfold to a man what he is, what he wants, what he ought to be, what he may become, is to furnish him with the completest evidence which can be given of the truth, importance, and divine origin of the religion of Jesus Christ: and such is the nature of the evidence which we mean to

adduce

adduce in the course of the following Lectures.

Christianity, as an appeal to the understanding of mankind, has triumphed over all opposition, and is established upon "a rock against which the gates of hell shall never prevail." If there be still infidels in the world, it is not that the proofs of the gospel are either feeble, or few in number; it is because the spirit of this world is predominant, it is because habits of acting wrong have been unhappily acquired. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. For every one that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." If, therefore, the influence of a present world could be moderated, and the powers of the world to come impressed; if men could be persuaded that it is their highest interest to subdue their corrupt affections and forsake their vices; that by "doing the will of God, they shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God," then every

every purpose of this institution were fully answered, then a service acceptable to God and beneficial to man shall be rendered, and we shall enjoy mutual satisfaction in having made the attempt, and in contemplating the success of it.

In this awful undertaking I engage with fear and trembling. I feel the ashes of my departed friend yet stirring under my feet. I behold his labours arrested by the hand of death. I feel my own strength how small, my charge how weighty. I hear an Apostle exclaim, "And who is sufficient for these things?" But another voice cries, "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, for I am with thee: be not dismayed for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea I will help thee; yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." If the Lord give the word, as he did to Cyrus, for the purpose of a temporal deliverance to his church, "the two-leaved gates shall open before him, the crooked places shall be made straight, the gates of brass shall be broken, and the bars of iron shall be cut in funder."

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It is impossible accurately to class the persons who may find themselves disposed to give attendance on such occasions as these, nor is it needful. There is a goodly proportion, we trust, who have actually attained what the Evangelist in the text, proposes to communicate, the knowledge of "the certainty of the things wherein they have been instructed," and who are holding "the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end." There may be others who, it is to be feared, have been instructed in the truth as it is in Jesus, have admitted it without scruple, without enquiry, and never seriously believed, because they took every thing for granted. How many have "a name to live and are dead," hold "the truth in unrighteousness," attempt to establish an impracticable union between Christ and Belial, Christ and Mammon, Christ and Molech? There is a lukewarm tribe, continually halting between two opinions, living and dying in a state of indifference and indecision, and a tribe, still more numerous, that of the idle, of the curious, who must at any rate get rid of that heavy commodity, their time; and, incapable
of

of disposing of it in wholesale; find themselves reduced to a petty traffic in variety. These hunt after novelty, however frivolous, while it is a novelty, and abandon it, however useful, interesting and important, as soon as that charm is lost. Determined, inveterate enemies of the gospel do not frequent places of public worship, and have given over reading the Scriptures, except in the view of finding food for their spleen and malevolence, and therefore may be considered as having no place in this enumeration: but there is a class which presented itself to my mind, the moment that the idea of such a lecture was suggested, and which, in the prosecution of it, engrosses almost all my thoughts: it is the class of ingenuous, well-descended, well-disposed, well-structured youth, entering on the perilous voyage of life, in a dissipated age, in a corrupted metropolis, where the siren song is heard at the corner of every street, and Circe's stupifying cup is constantly replenished from a thousand fountains. Have youthful modesty, simplicity, candor, sense of shame, sense of duty, been preserved? O how desirable to transmit these amiable qualities

qualities unimpaired, improved, into the maturity of manhood, the pursuits of active public or private life, and the dignified tranquillity of respectable old age. Has the tempter deceived, has the young heart been betrayed, and made to taste the bitterness of shame, of remorse? O how desirable to extricate the thoughtless bird from the snare of the fowler, to prevent inconsiderate error from degenerating into habits of vice, to restore composure to the troubled conscience, and confidence to the abashed countenance. If we cannot melt, convince, reclaim the hoary libertine and unbeliever himself, we will at least dispute with him the possession of yet unpoisoned minds, yet undegraded faculties, yet unperverted powers. This is the arduous purpose which we have formed. And with what armour are we furnished for the accomplishment of it? "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal." We mean to make a simple appeal to your hearts and consciences, in behalf of the religion of Jesus Christ. Without giving up one iota of the external evidence of Christianity, consisting of the distinct accomplishment of innumerable ancient predictions respect-

respecting the person, character, offices, actions, sufferings and death of Jesus of Nazareth; and of the performance of innumerable miracles by himself and his apostles, which were as certainly wrought as any other facts transmitted to us through the channel of history, we mean to take up Christianity as it is, and as it must appear to every candid enquirer, and to attempt a demonstration of the following propositions, in so many successive discourses:

1. That the religion of Jesus Christ is entirely conformable to all the ideas of Deity which we are enabled to form by the exercise of our own reason, on a serious contemplation of the great universe; in other words, that it is the true, and only, religion of nature:

2. That it is universally congenial to the constitution and frame of the human mind:

3. That it is most happily adapted to the feelings, necessities and expectations of the human heart, at every successive stage of man's existence:

4. That

4. That it is our most infallible guide, and our securest guard, amidst all the vicissitudes of this transitory life:

5. That it is the strongest and sweetest cement of human society :

6. That it is the only satisfactory interpretation of the mystery of Providence: and

7. That it constitutes the grand proof of immortality, and exhibits the only rational display of a life to come.

If these things should be, I will not say demonstrated, but rendered probable, presumable; should but a few of these good effects, and in an inferior degree, appear to be produced by the gospel, surely malignity must be disarmed, and a little credit given to Christianity, for the little good it does, though not to the full extent of its pretensions. Nay, supposing us totally to fail in our attempt; supposing no one of our positions made good, and that none of those benefits have resulted, or are likely to result from the belief and reception

ception of Christianity, we have still one modest plea to urge with its opposers, Why, what harm hath it done, or is it likely to do? Why hate the thing you affect to despise? Why this rancorous opposition to what were more effectually crushed by neglect? Why form cabals to run it down, when you have only to let it alone, and waste itself? Does not this zeal to subvert the religion of Jesus, excite suspicion, and betray a consciousness on your part, that there is more in it than you are willing to avow?—But this is only scattering words in the desert air. Persons of this description we commend, with a prayer of earnest heart, to the great Teacher who is able to remove mountains of prejudice, that he would open their eyes, and soften their hearts; and bestow on them the consolations of that religion which they now set at nought.

Permit me now, my young friends, whose improvement I have much at heart, and of whom my expectations are most sanguine, permit me to request your patient and candid attention, to what shall be addressed to you, I trust in the spirit of love, if not of power;

power; consult your own hearts, follow the dictates of your consciences, but be diffident of your own understanding. Neither admit hastily, nor yield slowly and reluctantly. Affect not to know and to feel what you are either wholly ignorant of, know imperfectly, or feel only through the medium of prepossession. The truth which you do know, and the power of which you really feel, neither be afraid nor ashamed modestly to acknowledge and declare.

I will endeavour, in the sequel of this discourse, from the passage which I have read, to remove some difficulties which are designedly thrown in the way of young minds, to prejudice them against the gospel.

It's ministers, they are told, make a trade of it; they have an interest in its extension, as being subservient to the attainment of fame, or wealth, or power, or all the three. It is said that the credit of the clerical order is their common aim, and their great bond of union. Our Evangelist was not a priest, but a man of a liberal profession, and a profession in no age

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or country suspected of a violent propensity toward religion. He is Luke the beloved physician, in other words, a man of erudition, of observation, of research, of experience. What worldly interest could he serve, what reputation was he going to acquire, by writing the history of the carpenter's son, and of his motley retinue, composed of publicans, fishermen, shepherds, and the other refuse of Galilee? Was he in the way to extend his practice, and increase his gain, by rambling over the cities of Asia in the train of an apostate pharisee, who lived on the produce of his labour in the occupation of a tent-maker? What suspicion of selfishness, of party-spirit, of enthusiasm, can fix upon a man who devoted his time, his talents, to the investigation of facts which he felt to be important to himself, and deemed to be important to mankind, in the view of publishing them to the world as an universal benefit? And in the same spirit, I would ask infidelity at this day, Whether the Christian ministry be upon the whole a lucrative profession? A few splendid beneficiaries excepted, who among us might not have done as well, or better, in the worldly sense of the word, in
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some one of the ten thousand channels which trade and commerce open to the exercise of avarice and ambition? Might not the same education, with the same talents, have raised us, with some of our fellow students, to distinction and affluence in medicine, at the bar, on the bench, in the senate? And does the Christian priesthood always draw together, like men embarked on the same bottom, and resolutely disposed to support each other to the last extremity? In what order of mankind do we find such diversity of opinion, such collision of interest, such contrariety of spirit and pursuit? The wonder is not, that Christianity should be a great, a popular, a flourishing cause, through the zeal, union and co-operation of its ministers; the miracle is, and it is by no means the weakest part of its external evidence, that Christianity should be a cause at all, considering the alienation, disunion, opposition of those who teach it; considering the estimation in which their persons and profession are generally held, and the vow of poverty which, voluntarily or involuntarily, the generality of them must make. When therefore you hear, young man, of the Chris-

tian priesthood as a well-compacted phalanx, engaged to maintain a cause feeble in itself, by harmony and mutual support, believe it not, for the reverse is the truth. It is the strength of the cause which sustains their feebleness, and counteracts their discord and mutual opposition. But when, on the other hand, you hear of their manifold infirmities, when you are told that they are "men of like passions with yourselves," believe it, for it is most deplorably true. Nevertheless even in this admire the wisdom of the great Supreme, whose ordinance it is, that "we should have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of us."

Again, it is insinuated, that Christianity was originally the fond persuasion merely of untutored and credulous minds, who admitted facts for their strangeness, doctrines for their novelty, and practices from an affectation of singularity, and the spirit of contradiction; and that it stole in upon the world, while the wise and prudent slumbered and slept. Quite the contrary. What was performed on one
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of the most public theatres of the globe, before multitudes of spectators of every possible description, many undertook to record on the very spot, at the very moment, while the events were still fresh, and where the facts were notorious. Before Luke sat down to write, "many had taken in hand to set forth "in order a declaration of things" well known among their neighbours, and "most "surely believed among them." These several "declarations" could easily be compared, and their harmony or inconsistency instantly discovered, by every one who read or heard. The slightest deviation from truth could have been at once detected and contradicted. Besides, these "declarations" were not a display of novel and uncommon opinions, but a detail of simple facts. In detailing matters of opinion, the imagination of the writer may give a colouring not perfectly conformable to truth, his memory may be unfaithful, there may be a contrary bias on his understanding; but in recording matters of fact, the appeal is made immediately to the eye and the ear, and the most illiterate peasant is in every respect as competent a judge as the most profound phi-

lophers. Was Herod slumbering and sleeping when, alarmed at the idea of Christ's arrival, "he sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof?" Were the scribes and pharisees asleep when they attended the footsteps of Jesus as spies, "watching him, whether he would heal on the sabbath-day; that they might find an accusation against him?" or when they laid wait "for him, seeking to catch something out of his mouth," which they might turn to his disadvantage? or when they sent their disciples, with the Herodians "to entangle him in his talk?" Was Pontius Pilate asleep when he received an accusation against him, sat in judgment upon him, condemned him to the death of the cross? And were the ministers of justice asleep when they executed this dreadful sentence? No, the world was alive and awake to every transaction, and exerted all its power, cunning and malignity to quash Christianity in the bud. The gospel did not take advantage of carelessness and credulity, but had to fight its way in the face of vigilance, envy and hatred. And did our Evangelist execute the task which
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he had undertaken in a superficial and slovenly manner? Let the work speak for itself. He goes to the fountain-head; weighs, compares his authorities; resorts to those "which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word:" he satisfies himself with nothing short of "a perfect understanding of all things from the very first," that he might detail them in due order. Without affectation of eloquence, without pomp of expression, he unfolds matters of the highest moment with all the simplicity of a child, and having modestly introduced himself, in this short preface, immediately withdraws, and appears again no more; filled with the majesty of his subject, he loses sight of himself.

Again, the religion of Jesus has been represented as tolerably adapted, perhaps, to the herd of mankind, to the apprehension and use of persons of vulgar understandings, and in a low condition, but altogether unworthy of the regard of cultivated minds, in eminent stations: and young men of the higher order, in respect of talents, rank and refinement, have been misled by a conceit that it betrayed a want of in-

tellect, that it was derogatory from dignity, to think and believe with the multitude. As if there were a separate system of nature, and a different standard of truth, and a distinct code of morality, for the learned and the illiterate, for the noble and the ignoble, for the servant and his master. Here is one decorated with the most splendid ascription of human greatness, who has been instructed in the truths of the Christian religion, and who does not seem to be ashamed of it; else Luke would hardly have presumed to obtrude upon him another volume on the subject, and follow it up with another still, in continuation. The *most excellent* Theophilus, whether he inherited that high distinction from his ancestors, or had acquired it by merit; whether it were a personal title, or an appendage of office; whether it denoted mental or ministerial superiority, the most excellent Theophilus, I say, did not deem his excellency disgraced or diminished, by becoming a disciple in the school of the despised Galilean, by receiving farther and more full information, respecting “the things in which he had been instructed,” that his doubts might be resolved, that his mind

mind might settle on a sure foundation, and his soul be filled with "peace and joy in believing." We would not for a single moment suffer it to be imagined that religion, especially the religion of the gospel, can derive any lustre, authenticity, or importance from the quality, the genius, or the celebrity of those who profess it. No, it is of a nature to confer, not to borrow respectability. But when we find in every age of the Christian church, first-rate characters, in every estimable respect, embracing, maintaining, promoting it, and glorying in it, the conclusion cannot be considered as extremely arrogant, that it is not totally destitute of a foundation; that it is not so very irrational and absurd, as some of the strong spirits of the day would represent it. Without recurring to ages very remote, or leaving our own island, might it not be asked, Whether a faith adopted, prized, recommended, illustrated, enforced by an Isaac Newton, a Robert Boyle, a John Locke, a Joseph Addison, a Lord Littleton, not one of them a priest, did not present itself with something like evidence? and whether it would not become our apprenticed philosophers, before

fore they exchange the Bible for the Age of Reason, to give the Bible a fair hearing, and not reject it in the lump, on the authority of one who modestly pretends to blot it out at a dash, from memory, without having refreshed his recollection by turning it over for nineteen or twenty years.

Once more, the idea of arriving at certainty in matters of religion has been derided; and the evidence of the most authentic truths has been represented as amounting to a peradventure at most; and unexperienced minds have been discouraged from pursuing enquiry, from the supposed impossibility of arriving at discovery. Hence they become easily satisfied, and, because they cannot attain every thing, are without much difficulty persuaded to attempt nothing. Indeed this censure applies not to religion only, but to every object of pursuit which calls for exertion and perseverance. Unhappily, the argument, such as it is, addresses itself to a feeble part of human nature, a disposition to indolence, a love of ease. The young man thinks, Why should I take so much trouble in a career so unprofitable?

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When I have done all, my progress is little or nothing. Why should I waste my time and labour in a hopeless attempt? Shall I dream of succeeding where so many have failed? This dastardly mode of reasoning has a direct, and a practical, tendency to fill the world with lukewarm, superficial, careless and unprofitable students, in science, in morals, in religion. The opposite principle ought to be strenuously inculcated on the minds of youth. They ought to be told, that to industry and perseverance nothing is hard, nothing impossible; that, as the dawning light gradually brightens into the perfect day, so bare possibility may rise into probability through its various gradations, till it amount to full and complete assurance. It was in the view of raising the perception, the belief, of his friend Theophilus up to absolute certainty, that St. Luke undertook to furnish him with unquestionable testimony concerning undoubted facts and events, the only kind of evidence of which the subject is susceptible. And knowing this great personage to be a reasonable being, he considers himself as having fulfilled his engagement, when he has produced his vouchers. The
youngest

youngest person in this assembly now knows many things of which he was once entirely ignorant; knows some things much better than formerly he did; and has at length acquired full and absolute conviction on points which he once doubted or disbelieved.

These are the particulars, of which, from the text, I wish to have you admonished. The gospel is not a cunningly devised fable, the production of cunning, self-interested priests; neither did it creep into the world unobserved, and silently acquire force till it became too powerful to be resisted: It has in every age and nation made proselytes, genuine proselytes, of every rank and condition of mankind, and would stand firm in its native majestic dignity, whether rulers believed in it or not: Finally, the proofs of its divine authority, taken together, amount to absolute *certainly*, unless all historical and moral evidence is to be renounced as fallacious; and all knowledge is to be reduced merely to mathematical science, and the contracted sphere of every one's individual experience.

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But that I may avail myself of every possible co-operation towards attaining the end which I have in view, I must earnestly implore the assistance of parents, and guardians, and all instructors of youth, in watching over the movements of opening minds, in guarding their hearts carefully against prejudice of every kind, even in favour of religion; in assisting them betimes to examine, and think, and judge for themselves. Let religion be presented to them, from infancy upward, in every mild, gentle and attractive form. Let it be impressed on their opening minds, that the only living and true God, the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is love. Let the Scriptures, and the sabbath, and the public and private exercises of devotion appear to them, not as severe impositions, but as matters of privilege, and sources of delight. Uncommanded, unnecessary austerities and restraints defeat the end which they profess to aim at, and excite disgust at what is in itself lovely and desirable. To an over-rigid religious discipline in early life, I impute much of that libertinism and licentiousness which disgrace so many of our young men from the North,
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the moment that they escape from the shackles of parental authority. They consider themselves as entitled to a compensation of liberty and pleasure, in youth, for the restriction and mortification to which their childhood was subjected, and, being their own pay-masters, they take it largely. Above all, let the moral principle be cultivated and strengthened from the beginning. Would you preserve your child from impiety, from infidelity, guard his heart against vice. Would you prevent his understanding from being perverted by erroneous and dangerous opinions, endeavour to keep his conscience pure, and his conduct irreproachable. We would not accuse even infidelity falsely, in alleging that it necessarily leads to vice. God forbid. It may be possible for an unbeliever to be a virtuous man. But we affirm without reserve, that the practice of vice naturally and necessarily leads to infidelity. When a man has quarrelled with his conscience, he must make up matters one way or other. He must either renounce his vices, and alter his conduct; or bring over his understanding to the side of his appetites, and seek refuge in unbelief from the persecution of his
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own thoughts ; and if appetite has acquired strength by indulgence, it is easy to see which way the balance will incline. Thus, as real religion and morality, so infidelity and vice, are inseparably embodied. Not that all who make a profession of religion are holy and just and good ; or that all who doubt or disbelieve certain speculative opinions must of course be ill livers : but that good men must consider it as their interest that religion should be true, and the wicked make it their interest that it should be false ; and we need not to be told how much the opinions of men are influenced by their interest, how readily they believe what they wish, and how slowly they admit what they fear to be true.

But you are well aware that no care on your part, no instruction, no precept will produce the desired effect, unless supported by example. Be therefore what you would have your young folks to be. Uniformity of conduct, gentleness of manners, placidity of temper, a steady but unostentatious piety, will have the force of ten thousand arguments, and beget conviction where dogmas fail. Having been

been enabled to act thus, you will be inspired with confidence toward God, that he will crown such labours of love with his blessing, that he will preserve your rising hopes from the "paths wherein destroyers go," make them well-informed and sound believers, wise, honest, good and useful men. If such pupils as these are brought to attend exercises of this kind, the work of the preacher will be easy and delightful; it will be a pleasure similar to that of dispensing to a numerous, wholesome, thriving family, wholesome food, and salutary admonition, to each one in his due measure, and at the proper season. May "the Lord give us understanding in all things." Amen.

LECT.

LECT. VI.

JOHN I. 18.

No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

MAN stands in an intimate relation to various orders of beings. Some are his inferiors, and subjected to his power and authority. Some are on a level with himself, but with endless shades of difference. Some rise above him on a scale of unknown, of unbounded excellence. He himself is on a progressively ascending or descending scale, of moral rectitude or depravity; and the termination of his mortal existence is hastening to decide in what direction his future and everlasting progress is to continue. Man early in life feels himself dependant, indebted, accountable. But on whom is he ultimately dependant, to whom is he chiefly indebted,

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and to whom is he finally responsible? The prosecution of this inquiry leads him step by step up to Deity ; and he soon discovers that of all the relations in which he is placed, those in which he stands to God are by far the most interesting and important. He finds that there is a source of being and felicity whom he hath not seen, whom he knows very imperfectly, but of whom he wishes to know more, and more clearly, more satisfyingly. He finds himself under a weight of obligation which it is impossible for him ever to discharge, yet feels himself disposed to make some return. And he finds that he has contracted much guilt toward this beneficent Creator and Preserver, the consciousness of which fills him with many an uneasy apprehension, and suggests many an anxious inquiry. Thus a variety of emotions are excited in the human breast, according as the man considers himself in the light of a dependant, a debtor, or a criminal, such as a sense of submission, of gratitude, of fear, and of hope.

But though man possesses faculties, by the exercise of which he may acquire the knowledge

ledge of his relation to Deity, and is conscious of the powerful emotions which they excite within him, yet his unassisted faculties are totally insufficient to instruct him in the nature and the will of God, in the duties imposed upon him by the Author and Supporter of his being, and in what he has reason to fear from his displeasure, or to expect from his goodness. Left to himself, therefore, the first of human beings is in a state of the most deplorable ignorance and uncertainty, in matters of the highest moment to him. His present existence is dark and comfortless, and a dismally oppressive cloud hangs over futurity. Religion is just as necessary to man as food and clothing: with this difference, that while he is furnished with an instinct capable of distinguishing between food and poison, and with a sagacity capable of preparing and adapting his raiment to his circumstances, he possesses no instinctive principle, no innate sagacity, to direct him in discovering, distinguishing and applying the proper nourishment, clothing, and ornament of his better part, the immortal mind. We accordingly find the acuteness, ingenuity and good sense, of nations destitute

of a divine revelation, in things relating to the body and a present world, forming a complete, and a melancholy contrast, with their stupidity and extravagance in religious opinions and practices. A sagacious, industrious, observing husbandman had invented a better mode of cultivating the corn-plant, the olive, the vine, and had taught it to his neighbours; the next age exalts him into a god, and pays him divine honours. A beneficent and useful animal, by an easy transition, is deified in its turn, and the idolatry imperceptibly descends till it assumes a nutritious or a medicinal plant for its object. For the same reason, the fears of mankind being ever fully as powerful as their hopes or their gratitude, noxious, dangerous and destructive plants, animals, and men have obtained religious homage and veneration; and malignant deities have disputed the prize with the benefactors of the human race.

We resort not to the savage uncivilized tribes for an illustration of these remarks, but refer you to the history of the most enlightened nations of the heathen world, Phenicia,
ancient

ancient Egypt, and Greece, and Rome; whose agricultural, commercial, scientific, political, progress and improvement, astonish and delight the world to this day, while their theology, and religious ceremonies, only provoke derision, kindle indignation, or excite abhorrence. That the picture of civilized paganism, painted by the hand of the apostle Paul, in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans, in strong colours indeed, is not however overcharged, we have the authority of their own writers, who unblushingly relate and describe what was unblushingly transacted. Their religion, so far from being the religion of nature, was, almost in every particular, a violation of nature, and a reproach to the human understanding. The question is not, Was the human mind capable of producing a more rational theology, and of prescribing a more reasonable service? but, Did it? and When, or Where? Was not the experiment awfully made? Had not the powers of the human mind full leisure and opportunity afforded them, to produce their noblest effort? Have they succeeded, or have they not? Infidelity,

with all its boldness, is not prepared to answer in the affirmative.

Now the Christian, without apprehending the imputation of arrogance, presumes to believe, and thinks he is able to prove, that Jesus of Nazareth has rendered this important service to mankind ; that he has delivered the only true religion of nature ; has alone unfolded the real character of Deity, has taught a worship worthy of man to present, and of God to accept ; has enforced a law, the counterpart and obligation of which every one recognizes in his own bosom ; has presented an oblation acceptable to God, and salutary to the guilty creature ; in a word, has blessed the world with the very thing which it always did, and ever will need, a theology which the understanding approves, to which the heart cleaves, and in which the troubled conscience finds certain repose. God grant that, in speaking on such a subject, we may not be permitted to "darken counsel by words without knowledge."

Permit

Permit me to repeat the proposition announced in the preceding Lecture, as the first link in the chain of internal evidence which we mean to produce, of the truth and divine original of the Christian religion: It is entirely conformable to all the ideas of Deity which we are enabled to form by the exercise of our own reason, on a serious contemplation of the great universe; in other words, it is the true and only religion of nature. “No
“ man hath seen God at any time: the only
“ begotten Son which is in the bosom of the
“ Father, he hath declared him.”

I shall confine myself strictly to such views of God as are presented to us by Jesus Christ himself, in the course of his personal ministry. Our proofs will accordingly be entirely derived from the gospel history, and conveyed in the very words of the Saviour of mankind.

1. Then, the great leading idea of nature, which represents God under the endearing character of a *Father*, is also the great pervading idea of the Christian religion. Nations savage and civilized all agree in this.

It is at once an instinctive feeling of the human heart, and a conclusion of the intellect, derived from observation and experience. The simplest notion of paternity is that of a being who conferred existence upon us, and consequently was before us. After tracing up our original a step or two, we find ourselves brought close to the common Parent of the human race, whose "offspring we all are," and in whom "we live and move and have our being." This relation combines all that is venerable in age, all that is respectable in authority, all that is dignified in wisdom, all that is amiable and attractive in beneficence, all that is irresistible and triumphant in compassion and tender mercy. Hence the aged, in general, are saluted by the honourable appellation of Father; hence it is bestowed on princes, and constitutes their noblest designation; hence the consolation which soothed the heart of Job under the pressure of calamity, "I was a Father to the poor;" hence the paternal delight which glows in the bosom of a benefactor toward the object of his goodwill, and the filial affection which overflows at the eyes of grateful sensibility. Christianity
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whose object it is to purify, to improve and to exalt all our feelings, all our faculties, accordingly displays, expands this relation through all its variety of influence and interest. Is Deity represented to us as a pattern for imitation? The great Teacher exhibits him not in the exercise of sovereignty, performing acts of power, or executing judgment; but in his character of Father, in which alone he is imitable, multiplying without end acts of kindness, showering down blessings even on the evil and the unthankful, and extending one act of grace after another, to the worst of criminals; not overcome of evil, but overcoming evil with good. “ If ye love
“ them which love you, what reward have
“ ye? and if ye salute your brethren only,
“ what do you more than others? But I say
“ unto you, love your enemies, bless them
“ that curse you, do good to them that hate
“ you, and pray for them that despitefully
“ use you and persecute you; that ye may
“ be the children of your FATHER which is
“ in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on
“ the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain
“ on the just and on the unjust.”

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What marks of a divine original are here? And here the fond expectations of nature, the fruit of experience, and the discoveries of revelation are one. If God were to vouchsafe to instruct men at all in religion, must it not be just such a religion as this, which presents views of himself so consonant to all that merits the name of Deity? Here he is clothed in all his majesty: "He maketh *his* sun to rise;" "He sendeth rain;" but his power is employed only in works of mercy. "His paths drop fatness," in him the mildness and compassion of a Father blend with omnipotence and supreme authority. Every man has in his own breast a proof that this doctrine is from heaven, for he knows that he himself has been thus tenderly, thus indulgently treated. He recognizes in the God whom the Son declares in this gospel, the self-same being of whose bounty he is a partaker every day, who pities his infirmities, pardons his offences, forgets his ingratitude. Were man, on the other hand, to be permitted to form his own ideas of Deity, with an assurance that they should be realized, Who but this God could be a God to one of his character, and in his condition?

condition? Who *could* be the Father of mankind, the instructor of the ignorant, the refuge of the miserable, the restorer of the fallen, the portion of the wise and good, except the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Nature, indeed, could hardly have raised her expectations so high; reason durst not have drawn a conclusion so bold; human imagination could not have formed a representation of Deity so lovely: but thus brought down to our perception, thus impressed on the heart, thus recommended to the understanding, thus displayed to the imagination, who but must be filled with peace and joy in believing, that the one living and true God, whom no man hath seen or can see, is the very God with whom we have to do, and whom “the only begotten Son, which “is in the bosom of the Father, hath declared.” And yet this is the religion, merciful Father, this is the religion which one part of mankind affects to treat with contempt, which another hates and persecutes, and which, alas, few understand and prize according to its real worth and excellence.

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2. But Jesus Christ has not only given us the justest, the most rational and the most satisfying *general* views of the Supreme Being, but has gone into a *particular* and *minute* detail of the ways of his providence, equally consonant to the appearances, and the dictates of nature, and to the conclusions of right reason. Nature and reason contemplate Deity not only as presiding over the higher orders of beings, in the superior departments of creation, but likewise as the vital principle which animates, supports and directs every class of creatures, nay, every individual of every class, whether inanimate, vegetable or animal. Nature and reason say God is light and heat in the sun, solidity in the rock, order in the revolution of the spheres, growth and fruitfulness in the plant, life and self-motion in the animal, as he is intelligence in the angel and in the man. And the despised Galilean, with an unaffected simplicity, at the same time with an energy peculiar to himself, exhibits a similar display of a constant, uniform and minute interposition of divine agency, through all the endless diversity of created nature. It is God who
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clothes “ the grafs of the field, which to day is,
 “ and to morrow is caſt into the oven.” It is
 God who arrays each particular lily of the
 field in a beauty and luſtre which eclipse
 Solomon in all his glory. “ Conſider the
 “ ravens: for they neither ſow nor reap;
 “ which neither have ſtore-houſe nor barn,
 “ and God feedeth them.” “ Are not two
 “ ſparrows ſold for a farthing? and one of
 “ them ſhall not fall to the ground without
 “ your father.” And mark, how the doc-
 trine of a particular providence, thus em-
 phatically taught, addreſſes itſelf to the ne-
 ceſſities, the deſires, the hopes of man, a
 being ſo much more glorious and important.
 It is pleaſing to meditate on a common Father,
 who has of one blood formed all nations of
 men to inhabit upon the face of the whole
 earth, and whoſe kingdom ruleth over all;
 but how much more pleaſing to ſay, “ My
 “ Lord and my God.” “ The very hairs of
 “ my head are all numbered.” I am “ of
 “ more value than many ſparrows.” “ Am
 “ I not much better than the fowls of the
 “ air?” Shall He not much more feed and
 clothe me, faithleſs and unbelieving that I
 am?

am? Here again, then, the doctrine of the gospel is in perfect unison with the native emotions of the heart of man, and with the results of every one's hourly experience. And yet this is the religion which one part of mankind affects to treat with contempt, which another hates and persecutes, and which, alas, few understand and prize according to its real worth and excellence. But,

3. The voice of nature, of reason and of the religion of the blessed Jesus are one, in another respect, of high importance to human felicity. As man must have an author of his being, live under parental government, and subsist on immediate and particular parental supplies, so he must be provided with means and opportunities, and an object, for the disburthening of his heart, according to the various aspects of the divine providence. There are moments of bitterness which the heart must pass without a human partaker, and there are sources of joy with which an earthly stranger must not intermeddle. There are seasons and situations when nothing less than Deity can fill the void in the human
4 soul,

soul, when God himself alone can be the help meet for man. In other words, man has continually within himself a call to turn unto God, to retire from every creature, and to converse with a Father who heareth and seeth in secret. On this principle we ventured to affirm that religion is just as necessary to man as food and clothing. Unhappily for him, it is but too true, he frequently contrives to do without it, or with a very scanty portion; but his mind can no more subsist in a state of tranquillity and comfort while alienated from God, than the body can enjoy health and vigor without a regular supply of daily bread. He therefore who teaches men to pray, is one of the greatest benefactors of mankind, for he instructs them how to multiply, refine and exalt all their delights, and how to diminish, alleviate and remove all their woes. Jesus, the friend of the human race, has condescended to perform this gracious office. He knows what is in man, and what is good for man. He places the needy, the helpless, the guilty creature, or the joyful, the prosperous, the pardoned, the restored, in the bosom of his Creator. He opens all heaven to his view,
discloses

discloses to him the hidden treasures of eternity, and transforms this earth into a paradise, by unveiling the mansions of the blessed, who do the will of God, and rejoice continually before him. By teaching his disciples to say, “*Our Father which art in heaven,*” he extinguishes all bitterness and wrath, he inspires and promotes every kind affection, he strengthens the bands of nature, and ennoble the various relations of human life. Every anxious worldly thought is repressed or relieved, when the heart has deposited all concern about the supply of the day with Him who “*knows what things we have need of before we ask them.*” How powerfully are thoughts and works of mercy impressed on the conscience, by remembering, in the presence of a much offended Father, how great our guilt is towards him, and that nevertheless we are encouraged to hope for mercy. How sweetly does the prayer correspond with the precept? “*Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.*” “*Be ye therefore merciful, even as your Father in heaven is merciful.*” What a guard is placed around
frail

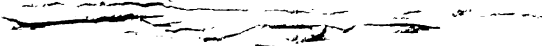
frail exposed man, when the soul has poured out its apprehension of difficulty and danger, before him who controls all the powers of heaven, and earth, and hell; who can prevent all evil, or remove it, or turn it into good! How the mind expands, in contemplating the great and glorious name of this universal, all-gracious Parent, made known to all his children; adored, exalted, delighted in by them: and in surveying the progress of his everlasting, unchangeable kingdom of peace, and love and joy, commencing, increasing, flourishing on the earth, and hastening to be perfected, consummated in heaven! If such views of the nature, will and worship of the great Lord of all, be not approved of right reason, as they are clearly unfolded to us on the page of inspiration, Who shall instruct us to render a reasonable service? Or is the world prepared solemnly to renounce all devotional exercises and enjoyments? And is it, indeed, to be henceforward deemed a mark of superior understanding to deride piety, and to break off all commerce with the Father of spirits? No, “the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” to us,

as the hearer of prayer, the God of all grace, the Father of mercies, the refuge of the miserable. He has declared to us how devotion blends with morality ; how the life that now is, derives all its value, all its felicity, from the relation which it bears to that which is to come ; how the worlds visible and invisible are subjected to one common head, who is carrying on one plan of eternal wisdom and goodness, of which the present and future happiness of the human race is one great, leading object. And such are the unspeakable benefits which the religion of Jesus Christ is conferring, at least disposed to confer, on the children of men ; and yet this is the religion which one part of mankind affects to treat with contempt, which another hates and persecutes ; and which, alas, few understand and prize according to its real worth and excellence.

4. But nature, conscience and Scripture concur in suggesting other ideas of Deity no less interesting to creatures such as we are. One God is our Father ; his kingdom ruleth over all ; He is the hearer of prayer, and
man

man occupies his highest station, when prostrated at the footstool of the throne of grace: But this God is also a wise ruler and a righteous judge, and man is an undutiful, ungrateful child, a disobedient and rebellious subject. Man is criminal and God is just. What provision can nature, can reason make, in such a case? The miserable effort of nature is to hide one's self from the presence of the Lord God amidst the trees of the garden, and to conceal conscious nakedness under a covering of fig leaves. The miserable inquiry of unassisted reason is, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the Most High God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Ah, this comes not up to the demands of the divine law, this satisfies not the human heart, this administers no repose to the troubled conscience. Deity rejects it with contempt and abhorrence: "I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices, or thy burnt-offerings to have been con-

“tinually before me. I will take no bullock
“out of thy house, nor he-goats out of
“thy folds; for every beast of the forest is
“mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.
“I know all the fowls of the mountains;
“and the wild beasts of the field are mine.
“If I were hungry I would not tell thee,
“for the world is mine and the fulness thereof.
“Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the
“blood of goats?” Here then all the powers
of nature fail; here a difficulty presents itself
to reason, which it is unable to solve; nothing
remains but a fearful looking-for of judgment.
“The soul that sinneth shall die.” The
sentence is just, but, Is there no remedy?
“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh
“away the sin of the world!” “The Son
“of man is come to seek and to save that
“which was lost.” “As Moses lifted up
“the serpent in the wilderness, even so must
“the Son of man be lifted up; that who-
“soever believeth in him, should not perish,
“but have eternal life.” “I am the good
“shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his
“life for the sheep.” “I give unto them
“eternal life; and they shall never perish,
“neither shall any pluck them out of my
“hand.”



“ hand.” “ God so loved the world, that
 “ he gave his only begotten Son, that who-
 “ soever believeth in him should not perish,
 “ but have everlasting life.” This is indeed
 a mystery of grace which no efforts of the
 human understanding could have discovered, a
 display of divine perfection which imagination
 itself durst not have portrayed, a method of sal-
 vation which “ angels desire to look into,” but
 are “ unable to find out the Almighty unto
 “ perfection.” This is a view of Deity which
 created nature could not have believed possible,
 till it was actually manifested. But now that
 it is manifested, how wonderfully, how de-
 lightfully, is it found to accord with the ne-
 cessities of the guilty creature, with the general
 tenor of the divine government, with the
 trembling expectations of the heart of man,
 and with the fairest conclusions of human
 reason? Might not a miserable being look
 for relief, to a God of mercy? Here it is to
 the full; a remedy that meets the disease at
 every point. Was it not meet that sin should
 be punished, the honour of the divine law
 vindicated, and the order of God’s govern-
 ment maintained and supported? Behold, here,
 how awful justice is, sin how odious, the law

how respectable, government how vigorous and impartial. Would not the criminal have had good cause to acquiesce, and to rejoice, had it pleased God to relax somewhat of the severity, or of the duration of his punishment? How much more when he graciously remits it altogether? Do the princes of this world remunerate, and exalt to honour, the wretches whose crimes they have pardoned? Is this a reason why the great God should not? Shall we dare to arraign his wisdom, because his ways are above our ways, and his thoughts above ours? Shall it be thought a thing incredible that God should be slow to anger, and of great kindness, because man is stern, implacable and unrelenting?

Man in his rude, dark, savage state, and man polished, intelligent, refined, has been, and is impressed, with the idea of natural distance from God, of the possibility, but the difficulty, of reconciliation; he has entertained the idea of expiatory, propitiatory sacrifice; of the substitution of victim in the place of victim, of the innocent suffering for the guilty, of "the just for the unjust to bring us unto God." Where could an idea so universal

universal have originated, but in the constitution and frame of the human mind? And is it to be rejected, merely because it is found to be the leading idea of the gospel? Are we to admit it where it appears in all its feebleness and absurdity, and spurn at it where alone it has a meaning, an object and an end? How strange! A man traduce the friend who has, unsolicited, become his security, and actually paid his debt? What! Admire the friendship of a Pylades and an Orestes, the one of whom was *ready* to lay down his life for the other? and no admiration expressed, no emotion felt, no tear of sympathy and contrition flow, when I hear of one who actually “dared to die,” to die for me! What can have made the world so exceedingly mad against the name of Jesus? As a man, so inoffensive, so unassuming; as a sage, so meek and condescending; as a benefactor, so unostentatious and humble; as a sufferer, so patient and unresentful; as a God, so majestic yet so mild! What can have made the world so exceedingly mad against a religion, which encroaches on no one right or feeling of humanity, which abridges, condemns, restrains

no one particular of rational human comfort; which enjoins no one article of belief but what the heart wishes “and the conscience feels” to be true; which imposes no yoke of duty but what it is the interest of every man voluntarily to assume, and joyfully to wear, had the name of Christ never been mentioned on the earth? What can have made the world so exceedingly mad against a religion, which aims at purifying, improving, exalting, perfecting human nature, by making man “partaker of a divine nature;” which tells him, what his own heart told him before, that in the great God, who made and sustains the universe, he has a Father in heaven ever able and ready to help; which instructs him that he who decks the lily, feeds the raven, supports the sparrow, the crane, the swallow on the wing, takes an interest far superior in himself; which gives him perpetual access to this greatest, wisest, best of beings, to rejoice in his liberality, to solicit the continuance of his bounty, to appeal to his compassion, to implore his forgiveness? What, in a word, can have made the world so exceedingly mad against a religion, which shews to miserable, guilty man his debt discharged, his iniquity

iniquity pardoned, the sentence of his condemnation “nailed to the cross;” which displays “heaven opened and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;” which exhibits death vanquished, disarmed; the fiery gulf extinguished; the great enemy loaded with everlasting chains; which discloses to our wondering eyes “new heavens, and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness;” which brings to light life and immortality? And yet this is the religion, with sorrow we repeat it, this is the religion which one part of mankind affects to treat with contempt; which another hates and persecutes, and which few understand and prize according to its real value and excellence.

If the representation given be any thing like the truth, then be assured, my young friend, that the person who attempts to put the religion of Jesus Christ, its doctrines, its morality, its positive institutions, in an odious or a ridiculous light to you, cannot possibly be your friend, any more than he who would teach you to laugh at the beauty and order of nature, to set your face against the decrees of eternal Providence, or to curse the wise and necessary

necessary restraints of civil society. He who insinuates to you that Christianity is in any one respect inimical to your happiness, is telling you a solemn untruth; is wickedly endeavouring to pervert your understanding, and to harden your heart. If the principle of conscience be deadened within you, morality will not long survive it; for What hold has the world got of that man who has cast off all fear of God, or who has made a God for himself, except the restraints which the laws of society are obliged to employ against thieves and murderers? Let it be a maxim of prudence with you, both in matters of life and of religion, never to relinquish the ground you occupy, till you perceive another attainable, at least as good. Ask the man who would seduce you from the belief, love, and practice of "the things wherein you have been instructed," What he proposes should supply their place. He would decoy you from your Father's house, but has he provided for you a better home? What harm can it do you, what danger do you run, in living and dying a Christian? But is it equally wise and safe, to live and to die an infidel? If the religion of
the

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the gospel be of God, then the Christian has every thing to hope, and nothing to fear; while the unbeliever has every thing to fear and nothing to hope: or should it prove but a cunningly devised fable, that is supposing the worst possible, the believer in Christ Jesus is a better and happier, and a more respectable man in this world; if there be an hereafter he cannot fall far below his unbelieving neighbour, and if there be none, he has gained much and lost nothing.

The next lecture which, if God permit, will be delivered this day three weeks, January the 14th, will be an attempt to prove that as the religion of Jesus Christ is entirely conformable to all the ideas of Deity which we are enabled to form by the exercise of our own reason, on a serious contemplation of the great universe; and accordingly the true and only religion of nature: so secondly, It is universally congenial to the constitution and frame of the human mind.

May the great parent of mankind, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, make
us

us all "perfect in every good work to do
" his will, working in us that which is well-
" pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ,
" to whom be glory for ever and ever.
" Amen."

LECT.

LECT. VII.

GEN. XXII. 15—18.

*And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,
And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy Son, thine only Son :
That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore : and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies ;
And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; because thou hast obeyed my voice.*

ACTS I. 7, 8.

And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times, or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

But

But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

WE make frequent use in speech of the phrases, "every corner of the globe," "the whole world," "the whole universe," "universal nature," and the like. But we know not "what we say, nor whereof we affirm." Grasping objects so vast, we remain in ignorance of those with which we are in close contact, and which are level to our capacity. He alone who made the worlds, understands the nature and extent, the uses and end, of his own work. While man is permitted to contemplate, and to enjoy, the beauty, harmony and beneficial influence of distant spheres, his activity and exertions are limited to his own. To climb to the summit of that mountain, or descend to the bottom of yonder valley; to dig a few inches into this corn-field, or a hundred fathoms into yonder copper-mine; to skim along the surface of the ocean, or to plunge a few feet under it; to ascertain

certain the qualities of this plant, or of that animal, by the indications of nature or the results of experience; thus far, and no farther, do the human powers extend. But man himself possesses a peculiar quality. Of the innumerable tribes which people this great globe, he alone is able to exist, and to enjoy life, in every latitude, and in every climate. To each particular region, particular species of plants and animals are adapted, in which they live, thrive, and attain perfection; but they cannot bear transplantation. Conveyed to a different situation, they become feeble and puny; they languish and die; or are preserved with so much trouble and expense in a sickly state, that curiosity or pride only would be disposed to make the experiment. But man is every where man. He can bear transplantation from the frozen horrors of the polar circles, to the burning heat of a vertical sun; and to be re-conveyed to the torpid gloom of the icy zone from whence he came. With shades of character various as those of stature, features and complexion, the same characteristics of humanity are to be found, in the east and in the west, to the north and to the south.

The

The religion of Jesus Christ possesses a correspondent character of universality, and proves its original to be divine, from its complete adaptation to the nature and condition of man; not in this district or in that, living under this or the other form of civil government, in a lofty or a lowly estate; but man universally, Greek or barbarian, Roman or Scythian, bond or free. As Deity "hath made
" of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell
" on all the face of the earth," so he is presenting unto all nations of men a religion which addresses itself to the understanding, the heart, the conscience of every man, let his endowments, his rank in life, his worldly possessions, be what they may. If this shall be made to appear, from a simple elucidation of the nature and design of Christianity, as it appears on the face of Scripture, we shall have a powerful presumption at least, if not a proof, that the God of human nature, and "the God
" and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," is one and the same. This we are now to attempt, by shewing in a few particulars, that the religion of Jesus Christ is congenial to the constitution and frame of the human mind.

Now

Now there are three well-known universal characters of humanity, to which the gospel, and the gospel alone, most happily applies, ignorance, guilt, and subjection to bondage. In other words, all men stand in need of an instructor, of an intercessor, of a deliverer ; and Jesus Christ undertakes, and fulfils, all these gracious offices to the human race.

I. Man is born, and continues long, in a state of ignorance. During the earlier periods of his existence, he is of all animals, at once the most interesting and important, and the feeblest, most helpless and most dependant. He must be clothed and fed by the hands of others. And when he comes to look about him, and to discern object from object, he discovers an instinct far inferior to that of many of the brute creation. He is slow of apprehension ; and to tardiness of apprehension is generally added a certain degree of perversity of disposition. And, unhappily, those who are about him, and to whom he looks up for instruction, are themselves ignorant and perverse ; unwisely severe, or unwisely indulgent, under the dominion of passion or of
O interest.

interest. Hence, the child, from the beginning, receives deceitful impressions of things, false, imperfect, perplexed information respecting the plainest and most important objects, which no future culture nor care is able to overcome. When time at length calls for the aid of regular nurture, To what attainments are the minds of youth directed? To accomplishments rather ornamental than useful; to the power of naming the same objects in two, three or four different languages; to the art of pleasing by modes of speech and behaviour, to the means of thriving and shining in the world; too often, to things which pollute the imagination, mislead the heart, and harden the conscience. The very leading maxims of our education are erroneous and seductive. Under the plausible epithets of *noble* emulation, *manly* ambition, *honest* pride, the worst, the most detestable and destructive of human passions are generated in the youthful breast. The first lesson which the promising, towardly boy receives from his master, is: "Be the first of your form. Let no one "surpass you." And the fond parent's heart leaps for joy, to hear that the child understood

stood the lesson, and put it in practice; not considering to what all this leads; envy, jealousy, insolence, false shame, every evil work. The successful candidate looks down with self-gratulation on his competitors; they regard him with hatred and aversion; conspiracies are formed to make his superiority sit uneasy upon him, and to undermine it; a flame is kindled, not with the celestial fire which exalts and refines, but with the infernal spirit of the wicked one, which devours and consumes. What is to result from this, when children wax into men, and the grand career opens to view? Consult the history of courts and cabinets, the history of the Alexanders and Cefars, the Scipios and Hannibals of ages past; the history of the statesmen and heroes of modern times, and it will be found, that the instructors of mankind, almost without exception, themselves misled by false ideas of glory, communicated them without reserve to the world, and the effect has been, and is, striving for the mastery has, in every age, converted the earth into a field of blood.

This some divines have called the state of nature; as if it could have been the intention

of the Author of nature to people the globe with animals more ferocious than lions and wolves; for they devour not one another of their own species. No, it rather belongs to the character of Deity to interpose a remedy for such an unnatural state, and to bring men back to himself, by reconciling them among themselves. And how was this to be effected? By a total inversion of our maxims, of our spirit and our plans; by making us unlearn what we had been taught, and to put ourselves under the tuition of a new master, who should "shew" to man "a more excellent way," and be himself the great example of what he recommended to others. This master, this grand desiderandum for the wisdom and happiness of the human race, presents himself to us in the person of Jesus of Nazareth; and for this blessed purpose the ministers of his religion are sent forth as witnesses for him, "to the uttermost parts of the earth." The spirit of the world had crept into his own little family: "There arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest." He mildly terminated the dispute, by placing a little child in the midst of them,

them, and by declaring that the way not only to rise in the kingdom of heaven, but even to obtain admission into it at all, was to reverse their whole system of sentiment and conduct, to renounce ambition, and to revert to the simplicity, the docility of childhood. "Who-
 " soever shall humble himself as this little
 " child, the same is greatest in the kingdom
 " of heaven." When I think of this, my spirit is stirred within me at the reflection, that on the eve of the nineteenth century, in Christian Britain, in her far-famed metropolis, it should be an amusement to grown men to urge on little children to do violence to their own nature, by beating, bruising, tearing each other. The same worldly spirit actuated the wife of Zebedee, and her two aspiring sons, to solicit the two first posts of honour in his kingdom. He gently waved the demand, and, to prevent its producing discord among the disciples, assured them all, that the way to rise in his kingdom was to descend. "Who-
 " soever will be great among you, let him be
 " your minister; and whosoever will be chief
 " among you, let him be your servant; even
 " as the Son of man came not to be ministered

“ unto, but to minister ;” plainly intimating that usefulness is true greatness ; that real dignity consists not in overtopping others, but in a voluntary humiliation of ourselves. Nor was this a vain parade of words, an ostentatious display of self-denial, a yoke imposed on the necks of others, which the imposer himself disdained to touch. The history and character of Jesus are comprized in two short sentences, “ He went about doing good.” “ He was meek and lowly in heart.”

Again, the spirit of the world, and the justice of the world, say, “ An eye for an eye, “ and a tooth for a tooth :” “ thou shalt love “ thy neighbour and hate thine enemy.” This law is founded on the unnatural state of human society. Were the voice of the great Teacher understood and felt, no man’s eye or tooth, no not a hair of his head, would suffer by the hand of violence ; there would be no enemy to hate ; the inhabitants of the world would be one vast united family, disposed to love, to cherish, and to assist one another. The spirit of the world saith, “ Revenge is “ sweet,” “ Raze it, raze it, even to the “ foun-

“ foundation thereof: happy shall he be that
“ rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.”

But what faith the Teacher sent from God?

“ Love your enemies, bless them that curse
“ you, do good to them that hate you, and
“ pray for them which despitefully use you
“ and persecute you.” Whether of these two

spirits, it may be asked, is the better, the more excellent, most congenial to the constitution and frame of the human mind? The soul must inwardly recoil from maxims and practices which prejudice and habit have rendered current. It is truly mortifying to find two of the most favoured of the whole college of the Apostles, if we may give them that appellation, James and John, so dreadfully carried away by the spirit of the world, so hasty in their decisions, so ignorant of their master's character, and of the design of his mission, as to propose, in resentment of a slight piece of disrespect, to call fire down from heaven to consume a village of the Samaritans. His meekness changes, for a moment, into severity:

“ He turned, and rebuked them, and said, ye
“ know not what manner of spirit ye are of,
“ for the Son of man is not come to destroy

"mens lives, but to save them." It is truly deplorable to find the whole eleven, as we see in the context, so dreadfully absorbed of the spirit of this world, after all that they had seen, and known, of their master, after being eye-witnesses of his sufferings and of the glory that followed, still hankering after the dignities and emoluments of a temporal kingdom, and expressing an indecent curiosity about future events. With his native meekness, he represses the inquiry as improper and unprofitable, and by his answer instructs them, and instructs us, that, "It is not for man to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power."

If, then, Jesus Christ has taught lessons of wisdom and morality suitable to all mankind, of every age and nation; if they are obvious to the capacity of every one possessed of common understanding, if they reconcile themselves, the moment that they are heard, to the radical principles of the human mind, if they have a manifest tendency to ameliorate the condition of the whole human race; and who can deny it? then, had he assumed no other character,

character, had he acted in no other capacity, the whole world of mankind is laid under infinite obligations to his wisdom and benevolence, and he stands confessed to every eye, except those of profligacy and prejudice, the dignified messenger and visible representative of the common Parent of the children of men. While, therefore, we think and speak respectfully of the Jewish legislator, and of the venerable instructors of pagan antiquity, a Zoroaster, a Pythagoras, a Confucius, a Solon, a Lycurgus, a Socrates, a Plato, and a multitude that might be named, Can it be deemed a flight of enthusiasm, or condemned as a prejudice, if we venture to affirm, that the morality of the gospel is purer, more sublime, more efficient; that it is better adapted to the nature of man, and more productive of real happiness to him, than that of all those sages put together; and also that Providence has confirmed its superior excellency, by bestowing upon it a much wider range, and a much longer duration. But there is a

II. Second character which Jesus Christ sustains, of universal, and perpetual, application
and

and use to the human race, that of Intercessor, or “ Mediator between God and man.” One of the earliest perceptions of the human mind is conscious criminality. The child finds he has been acting amiss, the moment he begins to reflect at all. As he grows up, he feels his propensity to what is forbidden grow stronger and stronger. He goes on to fulfil “ the desires of the flesh and of the mind ;” the breach becomes wider and wider between him, and the party whom he has offended, whether that party be a fellow-creature or the invisible God, against whom all offence ultimately points. As his inward uneasiness increases, the wish of remission and reconciliation increases with it. Invention goes to work, and the means of peace without, in order to restore tranquillity within, are imagined. Forming an idea of his Maker from what he knows of himself, a Deity severe, sanguinary, vindictive, presents himself to his affrighted imagination. And what wild extravagances has not this produced? Innumerable hecatombs have shed their blood, and smoked upon the altar of an implacable God. Thousands of rams have yielded up their innocent

nocent lives, and ten thousands of rivulets of oil have flowed. Horrid human sacrifices have been presented: The parent has given his "first-born for his transgression, the fruit" of the body for the sin of the soul." The more that the feelings of nature have been violated, the more acceptable has the oblation appeared. Now, whatever horror and absurdity may be in all this, it is the indication of an universal sentiment. It is the feeble effort of a helpless, or of a guilty creature, to secure a friend, or to reconcile an enemy; and the generality of the practice is a direct proof of the generality of the feeling. Here again, then, Christianity comes in as the universal medicine, and introduces the trembling suppliant, not to the presence of an ever-thundering Jupiter, an earth-shaking Neptune, a blood-stained Mars, a far-darting Apollo, every one clothed in his peculiar terror, through the medium of a furly selfish priest, who divided the spoils of the votary with his worthless Deity; but to a "God" who "so loved the world" that he gave his only begotten Son, that "whosoever believeth in him should not perish" but have everlasting life," through the mediation

diation of a brother, a friend, "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." What shall we say? Even the God of Israel clothed himself in terrible majesty. When he descended to promulgate his law from Sinai, the "mount burned with fire," and a great people approached, with fear and trembling, as near as they durst, "unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest; and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard intreated, that the word should not be spoken to them any more; and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake,"

It was reserved for the gospel of peace, to announce to a guilty world, the one living and true God, as the God of love; it was reserved for the Author and Finisher of the Christian faith to present the devout worshippers of Jehovah at a throne of Grace, with these words of holy confidence in their mouths, "Our Father which art in heaven." It was reserved for John Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, to point out to mankind one victim, which should supersede myriads, "the Lamb of God which taketh

“ taketh away the sin,” not of an individual, a family, a tribe, a whole nation, but “ which taketh away the sin of the world.” Here, and here only, the troubled conscience finds what it longed and looked for, a real atonement which reaches every case, of every wretched individual, of every age, “ to the uttermost part of the earth.” The spirit of every other known religion discovered partialities and prejudices, fenced itself round with walls and hedges, conferred exclusive privileges on all who were within the pale, and breathed destruction to all who were without it. It is the glory of Christianity to have removed those ungracious fences, to have brought men nearer to one another, and the whole great family near unto God. The annunciation of this blessed era, of this fulness of time, by the mouth of angels is, “ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will to men,” and good will among men. “ Christ suffered for us, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God.” Thus the blessed Jesus executes, for man, two offices of the highest importance to man. To ignorant, misled, erring man, he points out

out a path of duty simple, intelligible, practicable, of universal application, with this single index, in case of doubt or difficulty ;
“ All things whatsoever ye would that men
“ should do unto you, do ye also the same things
“ unto them ;” and to guilty man he proposes an universal propitiation, a purifying victim whose blood shed cleanseth from all sin ; and to man, by nature and wicked works, far off, he presents an advocate with the Father, who
“ suffered, the just for the unjust, that he
“ might bring us unto God.”

At this stage of my subject, I feel it impossible to resist my inclination to translate, for the use of such of my hearers as may not have seen the original, or may not be acquainted with the language of it, a passage from a celebrated author, not generally supposed very partial to Christianity, and which some will therefore consider as the testimony of an enemy. John James Rousseau puts the following sentiments into the mouth of an intelligent village priest of Savoy, which he undoubtedly meant should pass for his own :

“ I farther

“ I farther acknowledge that the majesty
“ of the Scriptures fills me with astonishment,
“ the sanctity of the gospel speaks to my
“ heart. Look into the books of the philo-
“ sophers, with all their affected pomp;
“ how mean they appear, when brought into
“ comparison with this little volume! Is it
“ possible that a book, at once so sublime, and
“ so simple, should be the work of men? Is
“ it possible that the person whose history it
“ contains should himself be nothing more
“ than a man? Where do we discover in him
“ the tone of an enthusiast, or of an ambitious
“ sectary? What gentleness and purity in his
“ manners! What affecting grace in his in-
“ structions! What elevation in his maxims!
“ What profound wisdom in his discourses!
“ What presence of mind, what acuteness, and
“ what propriety in his replies! What com-
“ mand over his passions! Where is the man,
“ where is the sage, capable of acting, of
“ suffering, and of dying without weakness,
“ and without ostentation? When Plato draws
“ the portrait of his imaginary just man;
“ covered with all the reproach of criminality,
“ and meriting all the rewards of virtue, he
“ paints

“ paints Jesus Christ stroke for stroke: the
“ resemblance is so striking, that the fathers
“ as one man felt it, and indeed it is im-
“ possible to commit a mistake. Under what
“ prejudice, what blindness must that man
“ labour who shall presume to state a com-
“ parison between the son of Sophronisca
“ (Socrates) and the son of Mary? To what
“ a distance is the one removed from the
“ other? Socrates dying, without pain, with-
“ out disgrace, easily supports his character
“ to the last; and unless that easy species of
“ death, had reflected honour on his life, it
“ might have been doubted whether Socrates,
“ with all his superior powers, were any
“ more than a sophist. He was the inventor,
“ we are told, of morality. Others before
“ him had reduced it into practice; all that
“ he did was to tell what they had done, and
“ to convert the examples which they had
“ set, into so many precepts. Aristides had
“ acted the part of a just man, before So-
“ crates had given a definition of justice.
“ Leonidas had devoted himself to death for
“ his country, before Socrates had told us
“ that the love of country is a moral duty.

“ Sparta

“ Sparta was a temperate city, before Socrates
 “ pronounced the eulogium of temperance ;
 “ before he explained the nature of virtue,
 “ Greece had actually produced a multitude
 “ of virtuous men. But from what models
 “ among his countrymen did Jesus copy that
 “ exalted and pure morality, of which he
 “ himself alone furnished at once the lesson,
 “ and the example ?” Here Rousseau refers
 to that part of the sermon on the mount which
 contains the parallel which Christ himself
 draws of the morality taught by Moses, and
 his own. Matt. v. 21, to the end ; then thus
 proceeds. “ From the bosom of the most
 “ furious fanaticism, the perfection of wis-
 “ dom caused its voice to be heard, and the
 “ simplicity of the most heroic virtues re-
 “ flected honour on the most abominable of
 “ all nations. The death of Socrates, calmly
 “ philosophizing amidst his friends, is the
 “ gentlest and most desirable which it is
 “ possible to imagine ; that of Jesus, expiring
 “ in torment, insulted, mocked, execrated by
 “ a whole people, is the most horrible which
 “ fear itself can paint. Socrates, as he takes
 “ the empoisoned cup, blesses the man who
 P “ puts

“ puts it into his hand, and who melts into
“ tears as he delivers it. Jesus, expiring in
“ agonies from the idea of which nature re-
“ coils, prays for his unrelenting murderers.
“ Yes, if the life and death of Socrates be
“ those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus
“ are those of a God. Shall we be told that
“ the history of the Gospel is an invention
“ merely? No, no, my friend, nothing here
“ has the air of fiction; and the facts trans-
“ mitted to us respecting Socrates, which no
“ one pretends to deny, are less clearly attested,
“ than those which relate to Jesus Christ.
“ In truth, this is only putting aside the dif-
“ ficulty, without doing it away. It would
“ be more inconceivable that several men
“ in concert should have fabricated the book
“ in question, than it is, that one man should
“ have furnished the subject of it. Never
“ would Jewish authors have found out either
“ that tone, or those morals; and the gospel
“ possesses characters of truth so grand, so
“ striking, so perfectly inimitable, that the
“ inventor of it would be a more astonishing
“ personage than the hero whom it displays.”

Respecting the mysterious and incomprehen-
fible

fible articles of the Christian religion, the Savoyard vicar gives this sensible advice to his pupil, which I beg leave earnestly to recommend to the attention of my hearers of every description: “ Young man, be always
 “ modest and circumspect; respect in silence
 “ what neither must be rejected, nor can be
 “ comprehended, and humble thyself before
 “ that great Being, to whom alone the truth
 “ is known.” I will not do Rousseau, with all his imperfections on his head, the injury, nor a modern railer against Christianity, whom I disdain to name, the honour, to contrast, comparison it cannot be, their spirit, their genius, their talents, their conduct. The one has purchased for himself a name which shall expire only with the world; the other, happily for the world, is already dead while he liveth.

3. The third universal character of human nature, to which the gospel most happily adapts itself, and by which it demonstrates its divine original, is subjection to bondage. Jesus Christ is the great Deliverer of mankind, as he is the great Teacher and Intercessor. We speak not here of that civil bondage and op-

pression, under which the greater part of the human race have groaned and travailed in pain together, from the beginning until now. This is truly deplorable ; but Christ's " kingdom is not of this world." He came not to ascertain secular rights, but to confer everlasting privileges ; He came not to raise up the throne of David which was fallen, nor to shake and overturn that of Cæsar which still stood ; but to establish an universal empire of " righteousness, and peace, and joy in " the Holy Ghost," of which there shall be no end. He came to command, and to work deliverance, from a bondage to which the tyrant and his victim, the oppressor and the oppressed, the slave and his master, are equally subjected — " the bondage of corruption ; the dominion " of the prince of the power of the air, the " spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience." He came to deliver mankind from the power of death, through the fear of which men were all their life-time subject unto bondage.

1. Every man is in a state of subjection to the corruption of his own nature ; he has
forged

forged fetters for himself; and habit makes them sit so easy, that at length he feels neither pain nor shame from his condition; and the generality of the case reconciles him entirely to his own. And what is the ignominy of those chains which gall the body, compared to the "fleshly lusts which war against the soul?" This is the kind of deliverance which it was predicted He should accomplish, a prediction which He read aloud in the public synagogue and applied to himself, and indeed which it was the great end of his mission to fulfil. For to no purpose is ignorant man instructed, and criminal man pardoned, if he remain the slave of sin; to no purpose is the poison repelled, and its effect counteracted, if the patient desperately swallow repeated mortal doses. Now, corrupted man is that desperate suicide patient, armed with deadly poison, to destroy all that renders existence a blessing. The Jews vaunted their freedom as Abraham's seed, while they wilfully resisted the truth, and were devising the murder of an innocent person. Strange idea of liberty, for a man deliberately to shut his eyes that he may not see, and to gratify his own unruly passions, at

whatever expense to another, even that of life itself. "If ye continue in my word, ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. Whosoever committeth sin is the servant," it ought to have been rendered *the slave*, of sin. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

2. Man has another powerful tyrant with whom to contend, who takes advantage of his internal weakness and depravity, who leads men captive at his will, and, unhappily, at their own: who assumes the form of a friend, transforms himself into an angel of light to deceive the nations: who shews men the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them, and promises to bestow them on his deluded votaries: who proposes riches to the covetous, pleasures to the sensual, honour and power to the ambitious, and men fall down and worship him, some from hope, some from fear. To deny the existence of such a being, is expressly to acknowledge his power, and to laugh the idea of his influence to scorn, is to afford a proof of it's awful extent. The danger arising from this quarter is, that no danger

danger appears. The great adversary finds it not to his purpose to retain his formidable character of a "roaring lion going about and seeking whom he may devour;" he has softened it down into his original character of serpent, saying, "ye shall not surely die, ye shall be as gods." To dissolve this fatal delusion, to destroy the works of the devil, to diminish, to shake, and at length totally to subvert his empire, to rescue the world of mankind from his yoke, was the great end for which the Son of God was manifested, and for this end he sent forth his witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth, even "to open mens eyes, "to turn them from darkness to light, and "from the power of Satan unto God." And, wonderful mode of triumph! the seed of the woman in giving his heel to be bruised, crushed the serpent's head. Jesus, "by dying, "destroyed him that hath the power of death, "that is the devil:" which leads for a moment to contemplate the Saviour of the world, as conqueror of,

3. A third formidable adversary, but the last enemy which shall be destroyed, even death. It is the approach of this foe which

clothes the other two in all their terror, which elicits remorse from the recollection of the past, and excites “ a fearful looking for “ of judgment,” in the prospect of futurity. Even in the arms of dissolution, man feels himself immortal, but what is immortality without hope, immortality clouded with more than dismal apprehension? Prisoner of hope lift up thy head, the enemy though formidable, is not invincible. Jesus hath “ abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light.” “ Being justified by “ faith” in Jesus “ we have peace with God, “ we rejoice in hope of the glory of God; the “ day of our redemption draweth nigh.” Hear the voice of the Son of God and live: “ I give unto them eternal life; and they “ shall never perish, neither shall any pluck “ them out of my hand: my Father which “ gave them me is greater than all; and “ none is able to pluck them out of my “ Father’s hand”—“ I am the resurrection, “ and the life; he that believeth in me, “ though he were dead, yet shall he live: “ and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, “ shall never die.”

And

And thus Jesus of Nazareth approves himself the best friend of the human race, in all the respects in which ignorant, guilty, miserable man stands in need of a friend. Thus the gospel proves it's divine original; proves that it is of him who made man, who knows what is in man, and what is good for man, from it's universal, and complete, adaptation to the constitution and frame of the human mind; it illumines what is dark, and strengthens what is weak; it brings peace to the troubled conscience, and subdues the power of indwelling corruption; it confers "the glorious liberty of the Sons of God, and makes "feeble helpless man more than a conqueror;" it bruises Satan under his feet, and plucks the sting out of death.

But "we see not yet all things put under" Messiah the Prince. We have still to deplore the awful extent of the empire of ignorance and error—the wilful ignorance of one part of mankind, and the mysteriously-permitted ignorance of another. We have still to lament over the multitudes who never heard of "redemption through the blood of Christ," and
ever

over the still more wretched multitudes who madly trample it under their feet, as an unholy thing. We have still to mourn over the voluntary slaves of sin and satan, and the unhappy victims of the second death. But let us not be discouraged. The cause of "the truth as it is in Jesus" has surmounted many difficulties, has vanquished many opponents, has levelled many strong holds. Had this counsel, and this work been of men, long before now it would have come to nought; but, being of God, it has not been overthrown, it cannot be overthrown. From the past we can reason to the future. The Scriptures have been fulfilled, are fulfilling, and not "one jot or one tittle shall in any wise pass—till all be fulfilled." In the seed promised to Abraham, "shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;" but "it is not for us to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." But when we pray to our Father in heaven, we have encouragement to say: "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth, as it is heaven." —His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and
"men

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“ men shall be blessed in him; all nations
“ shall call him blessed. Blessed be the Lord
“ God, the God of Israel, who only doth
“ wondrous things: and blessed be his glo-
“ rious name for ever; and let the whole
“ earth be filled with his glory.” Amen, and
amen.

LECT.



LECT. VIII.

LUKE XXIII. 39—43.

And one of the malefactors, which were hanged, railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ save thyself and us.

But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.

WITH innumerable marks of resemblance, which completely ascertain that all nations of men are formed of one blood, there are marks of discrimination equally

equally decisive, which demonstrate that every man is a singular individual, possessed of something peculiar to himself, moving in a sphere which is exclusively his own, and destined to fill a station, and to fulfil a purpose, for which he, and he only, is qualified. But this all-important individual has not only striking characteristics which clearly distinguish him from every other, but is himself, likewise, in a state of perpetual fluctuation and change. He is the same rational, conscious, responsible being, that he was from the beginning ; but both the physical and the moral agent has undergone, and is constantly undergoing, an endless variety of transformation of relative state ; of intellectual, of moral character ; of corresponding tranquillity or disquiet. Newton was once ignorant, Samson came into the world a feeble infant, David's heart smote him for having touched Saul's skirt, yet permitted him to accomplish the death of Uriah ; there was a period when Hazael shrunk from the thought of blood, and a period when he calmly digested the murder of his too confident royal master ; the two thieves, in the text, who had brought upon

upon themselves the dreadful punishment of the cross, entered on their career harmless, perhaps amiable, little children.

At every period, and in every state, of his existence, man needs a monitor, a guide, a guardian, a comforter, a supporter. There are seasons and situations in which every internal resource fails, and every stream of consolation from without is dried up: when the man, thrown back upon himself, feels only exhausted powers, depressed spirits, perplexed thoughts, tormenting apprehensions; or, cast upon the wide world, finds only unavailing sympathy, or cold neglect, perhaps bitter reproach, and insult more cruel than death; or, plunged into futurity, floating on the surface of a boundless ocean, discerns no object through the darkness which covers it, or objects which only overwhelm with astonishment, or which rouse despair. In other words, there are seasons and situations in which religion, and religion alone, can raise and support the spirit, comfort the heart, and illuminate the prospect. And when we say religion, we mean Christianity; for what else deserves the name; what else is adapted to the effect? We have attempted

tempted a proof, in the two preceding Lectures : That the religion of Jesus Christ is entirely conformable to all the ideas of Deity which we are enabled to form by the exercise of our own reason, from a serious contemplation of the great universe ; that is to say, it is the true and only religion of nature : and that it is universally congenial to the constitution and frame of the human mind : We are, from the induction of a few particular facts, now about to endeavour to prove, thirdly, that the religion of the gospel is most happily adapted to the feelings, the necessities, and the expectations of the human heart, at every successive stage, and in every possible condition of human existence, and that this too furnishes a strong presumption, if not a demonstration, of it's divine original.

I am well aware it may be said, that these are mere distinctions without a difference ; that we have been fancifully parcelling out the human mind into a variety of qualities and operations which cannot in nature be separated or distinguished ; as if three or more several applications could be made, on the
same

same subject, to the same individual, in a variety of respects; as if the being which discerns, which resolves, and which feels, were not one and the same. The anatomy of the mind, and of the body, is widely different. The parts of the external frame run indeed into each other; strengthen, support, nourish each other, but they remain for ever separate and distinct. The eye with its powers, faculties and results is never confounded, even by the vulgar, with those of the ear, the palate, or the hand. It is not so with those of the mind. Its powers are inseparable, indistinguishable. They mutually exchange names, assume each other's forms, execute each other's functions; they lead and are led by turns; or rather they constitute one active, determining principle, which it is impossible to define, but of whose existence and energy every reflecting man is conscious. It is, however, in most cases, with the mind as it is in the body; every extraordinary force in any one particular faculty is rarely, if ever, found associated with equal or similar force in all the other faculties. From an uncommon acuteness of vision, or of hearing, or of taste, or of the

other bodily senses, I should suspect a dulness or a deficiency, in those which are not the leading, or master, sense. In like manner, from a mind all eye, all intellect, we are led to expect cautious resolves, and cold exertions. A resolute disposition waits not for the calm deductions of sober reason, and frequently disregards the contingent, and even the probable or inevitable, consequences which may fall heavy on the heart; and, under the impulse of vehement affection or aversion, or any other domineering passion, the man feels the force of no argument that does not coincide with the present impulse, and he fluctuates from resolve to resolve, according as the tide sets in this way or that. In the present imperfect state of humanity, where, alas! shall we find an unclouded understanding dictating the decisions of the will, and these carried into effect with all the heart and with all the soul? But this leads us to the very point at which we are aiming. Take man in whatever light, under whatever character, you will, as an intelligent, as a self-determining, as a sensible and feeling being, or all at once, and in one, the gospel of Christ rises to him, descends with

with him, pursues him through all his wanderings, stands by him when every thing else fails and forsakes him; it teaches his best reason how to reason, it gently constrains him to chuse the good and to refuse the evil, and, by shedding abroad the love of God in the heart, makes the hardest road of duty a way of pleasantness, and a path of peace.

The penitent fellow-sufferer of our blessed Lord exhibits man placed in very peculiar circumstances, and it may be considered as an extreme case. Before, therefore, that we attend more particularly to it, let us look into a few others, which more frequently occur; and observe how Christianity meets them at all points, thereby proving itself to be of Him who knows all men, and who needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man. Observe

1, How sweetly, how suitably, the gospel applies itself to the condition and character of harmless childhood, of ingenuous, intelligent, and as yet uncontaminated youth. Behold Jesus himself, in all the affecting interest of

infancy in a state of poverty and depression, but marked out by signs in heaven, and signs on earth, to a rank which eclipses the state of kings. Behold him in all the loveliness of intelligent, modest, unassuming youth, retiring from the temple, where his understanding and answers had astonished every listening ear, and had captivated all hearts, descending with his mother and Joseph into the obscurity and reproach of a village of Galilee, becoming "subject to them;" and, in this humble retreat, "increasing in wisdom and stature, and "in favour with God and man." What a pattern to propose to our children! What an engine to work on the opening mind, on the tender susceptible heart! Behold him in the maturity of wisdom, in all the majesty of goodness, in all the plenitude of power and authority, descending to the level of little children, speaking kindly of them, and to them, receiving them into his arms, pronouncing his benediction upon them, declaring them the heirs of the kingdom of heaven, the charge of angels, the darling care of his heavenly Father. Hear the good Shepherd recommending attention to them as to the lambs

lambs of his flock, carrying them in his bosom, laying down his life for them. What a hold is here laid on the youthful affections ! “ The most dignified of all beings loves me, cherishes me, will suffer no one to do me wrong. He condescends to admonish, to instruct, to bless me. He has opened all heaven to my view, he laid down his life for my sake, he is gone to prepare a place for me. My Lord and my God ! thou art drawing me with cords of love, I give myself up entirely to thee. I am young, ignorant, inexperienced ; be thy wisdom my guide through life. I am a fallen, guilty creature, forgive me, restore me, strengthen me. I am liable to disease and death, but thou art able to heal every malady, both of the body, and of the mind ; and when I leave this world and die, I shall go unto thee, which is far better.”

2. Take the opposite extreme of human life, and observe how admirably adapted the religion of Jesus is to the condition and character of age. Every thing in the man has changed. The bodily organs are all debilitated,

blunted, decayed; the mental faculties are impaired, deranged, destroyed; the result of a long life's experience is "vanity of vanities, all is vanity." The reduced, the forlorn, the joyless creature, the poor remains of what he was, is become a burthen to himself, and to all around him. But this dark state is illumined, this depression is relieved, and the sinking heart finds support and consolation from the "exceeding great and precious promises" of "life and immortality brought to light by the gospel;" from the assurance that the day cometh when "all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall come forth;" from the animating, the unbounded prospect of "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness;" from the delightful confidence that to be "absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." Thus were the last days of Simeon cheered and comforted. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and he waited not in vain. He lived to see "the Lord's Christ," to embrace him, to rejoice in him; and every other object becomes uninteresting and insipid; "Lord, now lettest thou

“ thou thy servant depart in peace, according
 “ to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy
 “ salvation.” Hence the face of Stephen de-
 rived a lustre not his own, and shone like
 the face of an angel; he “saw heaven opened,
 “ and Jesus standing on the right hand of
 “ God.” Hence Paul, the aged, was made
 to “ rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of
 “ glory,” in the prospect of being made a
 sacrifice in the cause of his master, and in the
 brighter prospect of the glory that should fol-
 low: “ I am now ready to be offered, and
 “ the time of my departure is at hand. I
 “ have fought a good fight, I have finished
 “ my course, I have kept the faith. Hence-
 “ forth there is laid up for me a crown of
 “ righteousness, which the Lord the righteous
 “ judge shall give me at that day.—For the
 “ which cause also I suffer these things; ne-
 “ vertheless I am not ashamed: for I know
 “ whom I have believed, and am persuaded
 “ that he is able to keep that which I have
 “ committed unto him against that day.”
 Thus, once more, the solitude and languor
 of his exile to the isle of Patmos, “ for the
 “ word of God, and for the testimony of

"Jesus Christ," and the weight of accumulated years, were alleviated to the beloved disciple, by the sublime communications of the Lord's day, by the visions of the Almighty, by the foretastes of the glory to be revealed, by the gracious words which flowed from the lips of his glorified master: "Fear not; I am the first and the last, I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore. Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death." These are not the dark peradventures, the trembling uncertainties, the fond *ifs*, the timid conjectures, the half-formed conclusions of virtuous and enlightened paganism; of a Cyrus, a Cato, a Cicero, groping in the dark; rather hoping in immortality than daring to believe it; but the solid conviction of believers in Christ Jesus, who know their ground, and were ready always to give an answer to every man that asked a reason of the hope which was in them." There is a

3. Third well-known condition and character of human life, with its corresponding feelings and affections, to which the gospel peculiarly adapts

adapts its instructions, its support, its consolation; and which Christ himself displays as furnishing the leading proof of his divine mission: "to the poor the gospel is preached." There is a great class of mankind of whom the world makes no account, whom it despises and tramples upon, but who are of high estimation in the sight of God. The poor in spirit invite insult and oppression from the proud and the aspiring; instead of attracting kindness, challenging encouragement, and ensuring protection: but Jesus Christ pronounces them blessed, because "theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The poor in condition are treated as the offscouring of the earth; and, being the great majority of mankind, it seems as if the many were destined to become the victims of the few. But Christianity replaces mankind in an order more natural, and more equitable. That he might be a suitable instructor and example to the world, Jesus Christ assumed not a high station, nor great affluence, in which he could have had few disciples; and still fewer imitators; but, in an humble condition, He exemplified the corresponding temper and dispositions, meekness and humility, that
he

he might be a teacher of all, a pattern to all. Some of the most signal of his miracles were, accordingly, performed for the relief of the sons and daughters of poverty. Starving, fainting multitudes received from his hand a seasonable and ample supply. They had the accumulated satisfaction of participating of the repast which nature craved, and of beholding their provision multiply in the hand of the distributor.

But the gospel history, copying always from real life, exhibits poverty not as a simple evil, but blended, as it generally is, with some additional circumstance of depression and distress; that it may exhibit, at the same time, it's own native tendency to reach, and to remedy, the evil to it's utmost possible extent. Bartimeus was not only reduced to the sad necessity of begging his bread by the way-side, but, deprived of eye sight, was at the direction and disposal of those who saw, and they were ungenerous and unkind; they endeavoured to quash his suit, and to stifle the voice of his appeal. Happily for him, though blind, he had a tongue to cry for mercy, and Jesus the Son

Son of David had an ear of compassion, which was never deaf to the call of misery. The mind's eye had already discerned the great prophet "who should come into the world," and the first object which met the restored bodily organ was the great Restorer of fallen humanity in person. "Immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way." Poverty and blindness are, alas! a frequent association: no wonder then that it presented itself oftner than once in the progress of Him "who went about doing good." Bartimeus solicited and obtained relief, but the eye of Jesus prevented the tongue of the man blind from his birth, and his pity outran the complaint of distress, and the arm of power operated an unimplored cure. In this case, the illumination of the bodily eye seems to have preceded, and to have produced, the dispersion of moral and intellectual obscurity. The man distinguished not the Son of God, in the person of him who had anointed his eyes. His natural good-sense discerned indeed a prophet, and a worshipper, a man, of God; but it required another exertion of the power and grace of the Redeemer to exalt the conviction

conviction of natural reason into a principle of living faith on the Messiah. "Jesus said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? and Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he who talketh with thee. And he said, Lord I believe. And he worshipped him."

Behold the beggar Lazarus "laid at the rich man's gate, full of sores," perishing for hunger; "desiring," but desiring in vain, "to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the table" of unfeeling wealth, and thoughtless profusion; the pangs of famine sharpened to him by the sight and hearing of riotous waste. Can there be a lower depth of human wretchedness?—a body all ulcer, the keenest cravings of nature unsupplied, the bitterness of dying neglected, unpitied. See that longing, languishing, desponding look was his last; with that lengthened groan fled "the spirit unto God who gave it." Mark how the consolations of religion interpose. Behold the angels of God, ministering spirits sent forth to minister

minister to the heirs of salvation, depositing their charge in the bosom of the Father of the faithful. The man who had in his life-time received evil things, who had submitted patiently to the will of God, and cleaved to the prospects of immortality, is now comforted, he remembers his misery no more, he enjoys eternal rest.

Once more, look at the "man lame from his mother's womb;" incapable of self-motion, of earning subsistence, except by supplicating tones and looks, borne of others to the place of alms day by day, to solicit a precarious pittance from persons almost as poor as himself. With eyes fixed on the disciples of the carpenter's Son, he expects to receive something to procure him a morsel of bread. What must have been his astonishment and delight, on hearing "the name of Jesus of Nazareth" pronounced; and to feel his feet and ankle-bones receiving strength! "He leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God." And "the poor shall never cease out of the land;" "The poor we

“ we have always with us.” And are they alone of this description, think you, who subsist on charity, who earn a hard and scanty fare with the sweat of their brow, who rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of sorrows? Ah how many are there, whose own heart alone knoweth its bitterness? who are constrained to conceal the shame of poverty under the vail of composed looks and a fair appearance; who want and pine in secret, that they may seem to abound in the public eye? How many have the mortification of seeing all their projects fail, all their painful labours, all their honest industry prove fruitless, all their worldly hopes perish? What must become of such, did not Christianity repress each murmuring thought? did not the “ man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” reconcile the mind to a mean condition, and a hard lot, by representing his own? “ the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head;” did not a dawn of hope arise, of “ treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.”

This

This is the Christian's joy and crown of rejoicing; this is the mystery which the world cannot unfold; this is the miracle which the Spirit of the living God alone can operate: "As unknown, and yet well-known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." Where, but in the school of Christ, will a man learn, in whatsoever state he is, therewith to be content; how to be abased, and how to abound; where else shall he be instructed, both to be full, and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need? Where else shall he behold the precept, and the pattern, in perfect harmony?

4. Let us now look for a moment into the opposite condition and character of human life, affluence and its concomitants, influence, and power, and splendor, with the sentiments which they usually inspire; and let us observe how Jesus Christ, in the gospel, adapts his admonitions to this external state of man, and
to

to the spirit which it excites. Persons of a poor and low estate, frequently express an affected contempt of riches, and disguise real envy of the wealthy and prosperous, under the mask of pitying and despising them. But no man's person, and no condition of humanity, are in themselves despicable or hateful; for all is the work of an infinitely wise Providence. When the blessed Jesus, therefore, speaks of riches, or addresses his advice to the affluent, it is never with acrimony, contempt, or unkindness, but in the spirit of meekness, of compassion, of regret. If he points out the danger of a worldly spirit, if he condemns it, he is warning men to be on their guard against it, that they may learn to combat, and to subdue it. See yonder ruler addressing himself to Jesus Christ. Riches and power have not corrupted him. Though a ruler, and a man of large possessions, he is neither insolent nor assuming; he is modest and well-bred; he has lived a virtuous life, he is concerned about the salvation of his soul. His character and deportment are so unexceptionably amiable, that "Jesus beholding him, loved him." Alas, his condition was a snare

snare to him. He had yet to learn the true use of wealth. He understood, admitted, practised the *letter* of the law; but the *spirit* of it he felt not, even, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." It had never entered into his thoughts that the poor man could be his neighbour, or could have a claim upon his estate. He would do any thing to inherit eternal life, except making the sacrifice of his silver and gold. We are left however with a glimmering of hope, that his case, though dangerous, might not be desperate, that the sorrow which he expressed, might be after a godly sort, and "work repentance unto salvation not to be repented of."

With a wisdom truly divine, which traces the human heart through all its intricacies, Christ discerned the master-spring which puts, and keeps, the little world of man in motion, and He bends the whole force of his doctrine to oppose and counteract it. One brother lays hold of the whole inheritance of his father, and hardens his bowels against his own mother's son. The disappointed brother,

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considering

considering the wisdom and authority of Jesus, as favourable to his claim of a portion of the heritage, would gladly have employed him as an umpire. Jesus saw the spirit of the application, and repelled it. He came not to adjust secular interests. He saw the same spirit working in both brothers, and took occasion from it to caution mankind against that "evil concupiscence which is idolatry," and the root of all evil. "Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." The character which he delineates, to give weight to his remonstrance, and to confirm his doctrine, is that of a poor, fordid wretch, who represents a great multitude, overwhelmed by abundance, deferring enjoyment from year to year, till what was already too much, should become superfluously more; a man bent only on useless accumulation, and sinking all thoughts of a life to come, in making a provision for this world, which he was incapable of tasting: a case of folly so egregious, were it not so common, as to merit even in this world the treatment of lunacy. Affecting
view

view of a man, who “layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God!” In the history of the rich man at whose gate Lazarus was laid, Christ pursues the effects of a worldly spirit to its native and certain, though remote consequences. He is not accused of having acquired fortune by unjustifiable methods, nor of employing it as an engine of cruelty and oppression. Neither is he charged with burying one talent after another in the ground, without daring to use it. But there are more ways than one of abusing the things of this world. He is swallowed up of “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” “Clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day,” he has become callous to the demands of suffering humanity; absorbed in self, it is nothing to him what wretches feel; “to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant;” and the delusion goes on, till the thoughtless, unhappy wretch is overtaken by death and judgment.

But the gospel history has transmitted to us, together with these, an instance of the

just and generous use of substance, and of the power of true religion to new mould the heart of even a rich and worldly-minded man. It is that of Zaccheus, the chief of the publicans; against whom it is plainly insinuated, and indeed admitted by himself, that he had accumulated property by means highly unwarrantable. The presence and purity of Christ overawed him into a sense of justice, and compelled him to make ample restitution: "Lord, " if I have taken any thing from any man, " by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Then, and not till then, there was room for works of mercy, and the humbled, softened extortioner joyfully divides the remainder of his fortune with the poor. Then "salvation " came to his house," and thus "the Son of " man came to seek and to save that which " was lost."

Having thus adduced common and well-known conditions of human life, childhood and age, poverty and wealth, through a variety of gradations, as illustrative of the power and grace of the gospel, in ameliorating the state and character of man, and thereby demonstrative

monstrative of its divine original, we conclude with leading your attention, in the

Fifth and last place, to that singular and affecting instance of human misery, and of divine mercy, which is the subject of the history read at the opening of this discourse; for to adduce every instance to our purpose were the work not of a Lecture, but of a whole life.—We have here a man in a state of dreadful extremity, such as even this valley of tears exhibits not every day. A man floating on the confines of two worlds, in all the agony of bodily torture, pursued with all the remorse of an accusing conscience, telling him that he suffered justly, that he was receiving the due reward of his deeds; a man alarmed with the overwhelming apprehensions of instant judgment, and a miserable eternity. The hand of the executioner is lifted up to strike the blow which is to extinguish hope for ever, and, terminating bodily pain for a season, to let loose upon the soul the worm that dieth not. Awful interval, but not given up to the blackness of absolute despair! All is not lost, for the sinking eye can yet supplicate, and the

faltering lips pronounce a request. " Lord
" remember me when thou comest into thy
" kingdom!" Who is this that calls Jesus
Lord, now that he is despised and rejected of
all men; now that his disciples have forsaken
him and fled; now when they that see him
laugh him to scorn; now that his strength is
dried up like a potsherd; and his tongue
cleaveth to his jaws, and he is sinking into
the dust of death? Who is he that ascribeth
to him a kingdom, at this hour and power of
darkness, when earth has renounced him, and
the rays of heaven are intercepted, and hell
triumphs? Who is he that prays to one who
has resigned the power of saving himself?
O man, great is thy faith! Against hope thou
believest in hope; and thy hope shall not
make thee ashamed. And who is He that
from yonder triumphant ignominy disposes of
heavenly thrones, who opens and shuts at his
pleasure the everlasting doors of the invisible
world, who plucks the trembling creature as
a brand out of the burning, and transports the
prisoner of hope into the paradise of God? He
on whom help is laid, the Lord mighty to
save, even to the uttermost, them that come
unto

unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Thus, then, from the sweetest, mildest, meekest condition of human life, to the most dreadful extreme of depravation, and criminality; and distress, the gospel becomes “all things to all men;”—the instructor of babes, the consolation and joy of old age, the provision of poverty, the monitor of riches, the refuge of the miserable.

Put thyself, therefore, young man, under the tuition of this divine Instructor. Look to him, and learn of him to be meek, and patient, and submissive. This amiable period of your existence is passing away. The blossom begins to fall from the tree. Every thing has its season, and is beautiful in its season. The bud passes into the flower, and the flower into fruit, which gradually swells and colours into maturity. But if the bud be blighted, the spring will have no beauty, the summer no promise, autumn no fulness, winter no provision. An hour lost or mispent in the morning, makes a hurried, confused day, and an unpleasant, a remorseful evening. Do not unwisely increase the labour and difficulty of

next year, by loading it with the indolence, the folly, or the vice of that which is now spending itself. Behold Jesus, at the age of twelve years, "about his Father's business;" "in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing and asking them questions;" so that "all who heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." Learn of him to listen and to inquire. Behold him going down with his parents to Nazareth, and becoming "subject unto them;" and go and do likewise, and like him thou shalt "increase in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

What shall be done for thee, my aged friend? now that "the evil days are coming on, and the years drawing nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;" now that "the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars are waxing dim; and the clouds return after the rain;" now that "the keepers of the house" begin to "tremble," and "the strong man to be bowed down, and the grinders to cease, because they are few, and those that look out of the windows
" are

“ are darkened ;” now that “ fears are in
 “ the way, and the almond tree flourishes, and
 “ the grasshopper becomes a burden, and de-
 “ fire fails.” All these things are in the
 order and course of nature, and are not to be
 regretted as a real evil : Satiated of life, thou
 art ready to say with Job ; “ I lothe it, I
 “ would not live alway ; my days are vanity :”
 and with the apostle of the Gentiles, “ having
 “ a desire to depart and to be with Christ ;
 “ which is far better.” Now thou knowest
 the “ sureness of that foundation which God
 “ hath laid in Zion ;” the excellency of that
 “ hope which maketh not ashamed ;” the un-
 decaying vigor of that faith which “ still
 “ shall bring forth fruit in old age :” which
 is ever “ fat and flourishing.” That which
 was the ornament of youth, and the guide of
 life, will prove a support to the sinking spirit,
 and a crown of glory encircling the hoary
 head. Hold “ the beginning of thy con-
 “ fidence stedfast to the end.” Like Simeon,
 with Jesus and his gospel in thy embrace,
 thou canst smile in the face of death ; thou
 canst look up in holy triumph, and say : “ Lord,
 “ now lettest thou thy servant depart in
 “ peace,

“ peace, according to thy word: for mine
“ eyes have seen thy salvation:” and with
Paul the aged; “ I know whom I have be-
“ lieved, and am persuaded that he is able
“ to keep that which I have committed unto
“ him against that day.” I must not reverse
this portrait. The heart sinks at the idea of
old age destitute of the consolations of religion,
deserted of God, descending into the grave
without hope. “ Seek the Lord while he
“ may be found; call upon him while he is
“ near.”

To you, all ye sons and daughters of want,
the gospel of the blessed Jesus recommends it-
self with peculiar propriety. “ To the poor
“ the gospel is preached.” This was given
as one of the distinctive characters of the
Messiah; as a proof that Christ was he “ who
“ should come,” and that no other was to
be waited for. Behold the Author and Finisher
of your faith suffering hunger and thirst, as
ye sometimes do. Behold him “ despised
“ and rejected of men;” without “ a place
“ where to lay his head;” his wants supplied
by the sympathy and gratitude of pious
women,

women, who “ ministred unto him of their
 “ substance.” Behold the carpenter’s son,
 the companion of fishermen, conversing with
 the simple, feeding with the poor, walking
 from place to place on foot, in every form of
 humiliation; and cease from pride, cease from
 discontent. Be reconciled to the hardships of
 a necessitous, laborious, obscure condition of
 life. Be “ poor in spirit,” be patient, be
 diligent, be resigned to the will of God.
 “ The world is not your friend, nor the
 “ world’s law;” feeling the powers of a
 world to come, “ lay up for yourselves trea-
 “ sures in heaven, where neither moth nor
 “ rust doth corrupt, and no thief breaketh
 “ through to steal.” “ Fear not *little* flock,
 “ it is your Father’s good pleasure to give
 “ you the kingdom.”

Let not the “ rich of this world” be “ high-
 “ minded, but fear.” Let them not “ trust
 “ in uncertain riches, but in the living God,
 “ who giveth them all things richly to en-
 “ joy.” “ Take heed and beware of covet-
 “ ousness, for a man’s life consisteth not in
 “ the abundance of the things which he pos-
 “ sesseth.”

“ fesseth.” Meditate seriously on the danger to which your situation is exposed. “ How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God !” Think on the temptations arising out of ample means to indulge “ the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” In proportion to your danger be your vigilance, your jealousy over yourselves, your diffidence in your own wisdom and strength. “ Sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven,” and go and follow Jesus.

Let the miserable of every description look to the compassionate friend of the wretched and forlorn. For this end is he “ exalted a Prince and a Saviour.” “ The Lord hath sent him to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound :” — “ to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” Son, daughter, of woe, “ arise, he calleth thee.”

“ thee.” “ Look to me and be saved.”
“ Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are
“ heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”
“ Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have
“ called thee by thy name, thou art mine:
“ when thou passest through the waters I
“ will be with thee; and through the rivers,
“ they shall not overflow thee; when thou
“ walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be
“ burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon
“ thee.” The expiring thief cried for mercy,
and obtained it. With a broken and contrite
heart he prayed, “ Lord remember me,” and
he was heard, and accompanied his Saviour
from the agony of the cross to the paradise
of God. It is “ he that liveth, and was dead;
“ and behold,” saith he, “ I am alive for
“ evermore. Amen; and have the keys of
“ hell and of death.”—“ Blessed and holy is
“ he that hath part in the first resurrection;
“ on such the second death hath no power, but
“ they shall be priests of God, and of Christ:”
to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.



LECT. IX.

JOHN XVI. 33.

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

EVERY instant of a thinking man's life may be considered as a point of prospect, or a point of reflection. We are either reviewing the past, or diving into futurity. We are like travellers, who avail themselves of every little eminence on the road, to measure with their eye the track which they have been pursuing, and the space which is still extended before them. The present moment continually disappears at the moment; just as the spot on which we stand to view a landscape, itself disappears, though it be the centre and focus of all that we behold. It was an object of importance before we reached it, and it will

will recover its importance when we come to look back upon it. Our prospects necessarily take a colour from our retrospects. It is natural for us to expect, in some future attainment or deliverance, a compensation for the disappointments and disasters which we have endured ; and, from the goodness of an indulgent Providence, we hope for the continuation, progress and improvement of the blessings which we have enjoyed. “ Man never is, but always *to be* blest :” he never lives and enjoys, but is continually busied in making preparation to live and to enjoy. Whatever he possesses, there is still a farther possession attainable ; whatever he may suffer, hope looks forward to a period of repose and recompense. But fear likewise mingles in the cup of human life, and embitters it. The present good may be lost, it may be marred, it may be poisoned by some baleful infusion. The present pressure may increase till it become intolerable ; and this sorrow is, it may be, but the beginning of sorrows. The visible world vanishes, and the world of spirits rises to view ; time expires, and eternity resumes its awful empire. Man in old age,

age, in decay, even in death, feels the principle of immortality strong within him; and, according to the prospect before him, it is a source of the purest delight, or of the most oppressive sorrow. The first great concern, then, of a reasonable being, is the improvement and amelioration of his present condition, in a consistency with the felicity of a future and eternal duration. That weighty concern, the Father of our spirits has graciously taken into his own hands, and, viewing his creature man as intimately connected with both worlds, has provided, and disclosed, the means of certain happiness for him, in the life which now is, and in that which is to come. Man himself was wholly unequal to this. Man left to himself becomes a mere creature of this world, and, swallowed up of the things of time, becomes insensible to the powers of the world to come; or, under the influence of an ill-informed principle of religion, makes it a duty to sacrifice the present life entirely to the prospects of immortality. The religion of Jesus Christ, if we had the wisdom to be regulated by it, firmly establishes the one, without shaking the foundation of the other.

It strengthens the bands of human society, rivets the obligation of relative duty, sanctions and sanctifies innocent and lawful earthly enjoyments, rectifies the disorders, and controls the effects of human passions, administers consolation under, and finds a way to escape from, all the miseries which flesh is heir to. But at the same time, we are not permitted for a moment to forget, that all these things are transient, that they are a preparation for, and a progress toward, a higher, a holier, a happier, and a more permanent existence, brought to light by the Gospel. To unfold the native influence of Christianity on our present state and condition, as a farther proof of its divine original, is to be the attempt of this lecture.

The life of man is not merely a current flowing incessantly downward, with uniform speed, in a channel throughout of the same depth and wideness, but a stream undergoing every instant, sudden and unexpected variations; now, precipitated over the rock, and anon, slumbering through the plain; here, confined within barriers which hardly afford a passage, and there, spreading into an ocean;
to-day,

to-day, swollen above its banks by the torrent from the mountain, to-morrow, drunk up by the fervent heat of a vertical sun. He must have lived a very short time in the world, or life must have flowed in a very even tenor indeed, or he must be a person little given to observation, who is not conscious of something more than the mere lapse of time, of the transition from one measurement of human life to another. Who among us is so young as not to have felt, and so forgetful as not to recollect, the sad transition from health to sickness, from ease to pain, from joy to sorrow? Were there not seasons and situations in which we needed a counsellor, a comforter, a supporter; when we looked for them, but found them not? Are there not cases which baffle all created skill, to cure, or even to mitigate? Dare we hope to be in future exempted from the common lot of humanity, or can we believe that the arrows of the Almighty are exhausted; or is it possible to presume on our own internal resources against the evil day? If not, O let us listen to the words of life, flowing from the lips of Him who spake as never man spake: "Come unto me, all ye
 " that labour and are heavy laden, and I will

“ give you rest.” “ These things I have
“ spoken unto you, that in me ye might have
“ peace. In the world ye shall have tribu-
“ lation : but be of good cheer, I have over-
“ come the world.”

In these words Jesus fairly proposes to his disciples, what he both could and would bestow upon them ; all the blessings included in the comprehensive term *peace* ; and He points out where it resided, “ in me ye shall have peace.” With equal candor He declares what they were not to expect from their relation to him ; not worldly ease, honour, power, riches ; but the reverse of these, worldly distress and tribulation. He administers strong consolation under the worst that could befall them ; it was temporary, and therefore tolerable ; it could reach the body, without affecting the composure and tranquility of the soul ; “ be of good cheer.” And finally, he shews the possibility of a triumph over the world, whatever form it might assume, in an instance with which they were intimately acquainted ; “ I have overcome the world.” A brief recapitulation of these particulars, will contain all that we mean to advance on the subject.

1st. Jesus

1st. Jesus Christ candidly proposes to his followers, what he both can and will bestow upon them; all the blessings included in the comprehensive term *peace*: thus and thus, says he, have I spoken, "that ye might have peace." The original state of the world was perfect harmony. "God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good." All was order in external nature; the earth in rich profusion yielded her increase; the animal tribes, at peace among themselves, yielded an united and a joyful submission to their common lord. His sway over them was exercised with lenity and affection. Man, rejoicing in conscious existence, superiority, felicity, referred all to the God who made him; and Deity rejoiced in all his works. The creation of "an help meet for man" extended the empire of peace, and the spirit of love. The entrance of sin into the world, disturbed this blessed harmony, rendered guilty man a terror to himself, tore asunder the bands of affection, transmitted the spirit of discord into the brute creation, generated elementary strife, "drove out the man, placed cherubims, and

“ a flaming sword, which turned every way,
“ to keep the way of the tree of life.” Ah,
we now know too well what peace is, from its
fierce opposite; from the pangs of an ac-
cusing conscience, and the threatenings of a
violated law; from domestic discord, and na-
tional animosity; from the confused noise of
the warrior, and garments rolled in blood;
from the many-formed evils which wretched
mortals endure, and from a fearful looking for
of judgment to come. Is it a light thing,
then, to hear of “ peace on earth and good
will to men?” What heart is so hard, what
spirit so bold as to resolve on everlasting war?
What, remain an eternal prey to the stings and
scorpions of a hell in the breast? What, carry
the hatred, and discord, and wrath of this mis-
erable life, into a never-ending state of being!
What, lie for ever under the just displeasure
of a holy and righteous God! The soul
recoils from an idea so horrible, it cleaves to
the glad tidings of great joy, it opens to re-
ceive the great Peace-maker, it beholds para-
dise restored, the way of the tree of life laid
open, the spirit of love revived, all heaven
poured into the bosom. Is it nothing to a
guilty

guilty creature to be assured that his sins are forgiven, that he is reconciled unto God, that he is passed from death unto life? Is it nothing for him to feel corruption every day dying within him, and the image of Christ gradually forming in his heart? Is it nothing to be “filled with peace and joy in believing,” and to “rejoice in hope of the glory of God?” O, what do we not owe to him whose words procure, inspire, a peace which passeth all understanding! “Blessed be the peacemaker; He is the Son of God.”

Is there one among us who has known the bitterness of alienation, of estrangement, from a parent, from a brother, from a friend who was as his own soul; and who, through the mediation of wisdom and goodness, has been made to taste the delight of reconciliation, of renovated sentiments and habits of tenderness; let him declare the obligation conferred by the friend of mankind, who, by the sacrifice of himself, has purchased our peace; who “suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” What are the things which Christ has spoken, to

confer this holy composure, this unutterable peace? Look into the context, “The Spirit of Truth will come, and will guide you into all truth; he will shew you things to come: your sorrow shall be turned into joy: I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you: whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you: ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full: The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.”

2dly. He points out where this peace resides, where it is laid up: “that *in me* ye might have peace.” He who made peace is also the conservator of it. Restored friendship is of a delicate texture. It calls for vigilance and circumspection. A relapse into coldness and disaffection might prove irrecoverable. The hand which united the broken cord must keep it knit together. Man, frail man, must not be entrusted with the management of his own most valuable possession, he cannot be the guardian of his own peace. It is

is the hand of a Mediator; it is laid up
 " with Christ in God." When the believer
 looks into himself, he finds no ground of
 confidence; he sees much to distress, and to
 discourage him; he sees " a law in the mem-
 " bers, warring against the law of the mind,
 " and bringing him into captivity to the law
 " of sin which is in the members." This
 disturbs inward peace, this produces a con-
 flict which rends the spirit, and produces
 this desponding exclamation: " O wretched
 " man that I am! who shall deliver me from
 " the body of this death?" But the words
 of Jesus restore the balance of the soul, and
 still the complaint: " In me ye shall have
 " peace." That corruption shall not prevail;
 " My grace is sufficient for thee: for my
 " strength is made perfect in weakness."
 " Those, Holy Father, that thou gavest me,
 " I have kept, and none of them is lost. I
 " give unto them eternal life; and they shall
 " never perish, neither shall any pluck them
 " out of my hand. My Father which gave
 " them me is greater than all: and none is able
 " to pluck them out of my Father's hand."
 " Abide," therefore, " in me, and I in you.

As

“ As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself,
“ except it abide in the vine; no more can
“ ye, except ye abide in me: for without me
“ ye can do nothing.” Christ having thus
proposed unreservedly what he was able and
ready to bestow, on his disciples, peace with
God, peace of conscience, peace among them-
selves, and, as far as in them lay, peace with
all men, with equal candor declares,

3dly. What they were not to expect from
their relation to him; not the respect, the ap-
plause, the enjoyments of the world, but it's
resentment and hatred: “ In the world ye
shall have tribulation.” This comes directly
to the point which we have in view. When
we look into life, we find all men breaking
out into occasional fits of complaint against
the world, and alleging with the prophet, in
the moment of spleen, that they do well to
be angry. They had created an ideal world
to themselves; and not finding that creation
realized in experience, instead of accusing
their own rashness and presumption, they com-
plain of the order and justice of Providence.
Their path was ever to be smooth, their plans
prosperous;

prosperous; “the stars in their courses” were to fight for them. They had not taken into the account, changes, and war, and death. Expectation raised too high, on the one hand, and an injudicious security on the other, mar the relish of earthly comforts, and aggravate the unavoidable miseries of human life. Like spoiled children we peevishly reject ten thousand blessings which are within our reach, because a single one is denied us. Reason discerns the folly of this, but reason is a feeble principle when counteracted by ardent passions, and by powerful interests. In truth, sudden transitions, unless “the heart is established by grace,” produce humiliating effects on the human mind. Unexpected success renders mere man vain, insolent, self-sufficient. Under the pressure of unforeseen calamity, he becomes melancholy and dejected, and gives all up for lost. In both cases the world is all in all, and immortal interests are swallowed up of the feelings and pursuit of the moment. What man needs, therefore, is a regulating, active, commanding principle, which will not change with the wind, which will not follow the impulses of the moon;

moon; which will accompany him into the bright regions of prosperity, admonish him, guide him, guard him; and open to his view a brighter region, which shall eclipse all "the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them;" and which will descend with him into the depths of adversity, to soothe, to cheer, to comfort him; and which, even in death, will not forsake him. And it is this which recommends the gospel of Jesus Christ to the approbation and choice of every one, who would get through life creditably, usefully, happily; and who knows and feels that he has an interest in worlds beyond the grave.

Had the object of the Christian Leader been to obtain for himself a name among the great of the earth, to form a numerous and powerful party, would he have denounced the cross to his followers, would he have imposed the yoke of mortification and self-denial, would he have threatened them with "tribulation" in the world? But far be from the Saviour of mankind such mean, such unworthy views. He came to instruct men, to redeem them, to bless them; to shew them,
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in his own person, how the cross might be borne, how the world might be overcome. He knew that the friendship of the world is enmity against God, and he prepared his disciples for a voluntary renunciation of that friendship, that they might be at peace with God. Will it be alleged that the case is now altered; that the spirit of the world is softened down, that the enmity has ceased? Ah no! the follower of Jesus must still be admonished to be cautious, to be vigilant, to beware of men; to be jealous over himself with a holy jealousy. “ Love not the world, neither the
 “ things that are in the world. If any man
 “ love the world, the love of the Father is
 “ not in him; for all that is in the world,
 “ the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the
 “ eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the
 “ Father, but is of the world.”

The poor and afflicted part of mankind are apt to imagine that poverty and its concomitant distresses constitute the whole of worldly tribulation, and the only species of it. They often envy those who are much greater objects of compassion than themselves. They
 have

have no conception of the splendid misery of greatness; of the torments of disappointed ambition, of mortified pride; of the deceitfulness, the solicitude, the insufficiency, the uncertainty of riches. They reflect not, as they ought with gratitude, that while the miseries of their hard lot are carrying them beyond the world, leading them to God, rendering the support and consolations of religion, and the prospects of immortality sweet unto them, the vanities and pleasures of life are deadening the worldly mind to all serious impressions, and sinking the immortal being into the mere animal. But it is the glory of Christianity to adapt itself equally, and with effect, to all conditions, and to every change of condition. Like its great Author, itself without “variableness or shadow of turning,” there is not a vicissitude to which our mortal existence is exposed, to which it is not ready to apply a counsel, a caution, a cordial, a promise. God in his providence is pleased to try that man with uncommon worldly success. From indigence and obscurity he has risen into celebrity and affluence; whatever he doth prospers, his character is fair, his conscience clear,

clear, his conduct irreproachable; all men speak well of him. Ah, he is "set in slippery places;" if religion do not hold him up, he will stumble and fall. His own heart will mislead him, a fawning flattering world will ensnare him; he is in danger of forgetting himself, and of forgetting God. Where is his security? What shall carry him through the conflict? the salutary admonitions, the edifying example, of the real friend of men. These earthly treasures perish with the using: the moth may devour them, the rust may corrupt them, thieves may break through and steal them away. "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven:" "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." "Be not high-minded, but fear." "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls."

Is the opposite, and more common trial, the allotment of providence to thee, my friend? Hast thou experienced the sad exchange of sickness for health; of obloquy and reproach for friendship and flattery; of scarcity for abundance? Be of good cheer. Thou hast
not

not lost the testimony of a good conscience, thou hast not made shipwreck of thy faith. The master whom thou serveſt “ was deſpiſed
“ and rejected of men, a man of ſorrows and
“ acquainted with grief.” He endured hunger and thirſt; he had not where to lay his head; he was taken from “ priſon and from
“ judgment; he was cut off from the land of
“ the living.” “ In the world ye ſhall have
“ tribulation.” But bleſſed are ye “ when
“ men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you,
“ and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you,
“ falſly, for my ſake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in
“ heaven.” “ Bleſſed are they that mourn,
“ for they ſhall be comforted.” “ Be not
“ afraid of them that kill the body, and
“ after that have no more that they can do.”
“ Even the very hairs of your head are all
“ numbered:” “ Fear not, therefore: I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father
“ hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat
“ and drink at my table in my kingdom.”
At theſe words, the drooping ſpirit revives, and the countenance brightens up. The world is reduced to its proper compaſs, loſes its
4 weight,

weight, loses its terror, loses its empire. "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

4. But is this merely a fine spun theory? the invention of a man at his ease, and calculated for men at their ease; but which evaporates into thin air, when the fiery trial comes? No, he who administers the consolation, who announces the coming storm, who can direct and temper its fury, has given the example of patient suffering, of persevering and successful conflict, of final and complete triumph. "I have overcome the world." He cannot be said to overcome the world who shuns it, who withdraws from it; but he who lives in it, and yet lives above it. Victory over the world consists not in hating, traduc-

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ing,

ing, avoiding mankind, much less in unnecessarily provoking their resentment and unkindness, in order to have matter of accusation against them; but in mingling with them and shewing kindness to them; in opposing the spirit of meekness to violence; in condemning corrupt maxims and licentious practices, not by affected austerity, and the harshness of reproof, but by simplicity of manners, a steady and uniform dissent, and a holy abstinence from all "appearance of evil." There are cases indeed which, with frail, fallible man, the truest courage is to fly, for in frail, fallible man, the prince of this world when he cometh, will ever find some vulnerable part of which to take advantage, and "we are not ignorant of his devices;" but the Captain of our salvation, in advancing to the combat, had nothing on which the adversary could fix. Temptation from every quarter, and of every kind, was resisted and overcome. The cravings of hunger, the thirst of glory, the love of fame, were all suppressed in him, whose meat and drink it was to do the will of his heavenly Father, and to finish his work. Who overcomes the world? He who may be
a king,

a king, and will not; he who has the treasures of the earth, and of the sea, at his command, yet satisfies himself with drawing the penny of the day from a fish's mouth; he who can mix with publicans and sinners, and receive no contamination; he who perseveres in well-doing, though treated with insult and ingratitude; he who, possessed of power to avenge himself, exercises only the superiority of beneficence; he who is "not overcome of evil, but who overcomes evil with good." Thus it was, blessed Jesus, that it pleased thee to conquer, and thus thou hast taught us to conquer also. Thus didst thou approve thyself the Son of God; not by condemning, and destroying the world, but by resisting its power, exposing its illusion, subduing its influence. Impart to us of thy wisdom and strength, that we also may overcome, and sit down with thee in thy throne. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Wouldest thou, then, O man, provide thyself with an infallible guide, a sure support, and an invincible guard, amidst all the changing scenes of this transitory life, “look to
“Jesus the author and finisher of thy faith;” go in his strength, imbibe his spirit, repose confidence in his grace. He interceded for you while he was yet on earth, and in heaven he maketh continual intercession for you.
“Now I am no more in the world, but these
“are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy
“Father, keep through thine own name those
“whom thou hast given me, that they may be
“one as we are. These things I speak, in the
“world, that they might have my joy fulfilled
“in themselves; I have given them thy
“word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I
“am not of the world. I pray not that thou
“shouldest take them out of the world, but
“that thou shouldest keep them from the
“evil. Sanctify them through thy truth:
“thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me
“into the world, even so have I also sent
“them into the world. Neither pray I for
“these alone, but for them also which shall
believe

“ believe on me through their word : that
 “ they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in
 “ me, and I in thee ; that they also may be
 “ one in us : that the world may believe that
 “ thou hast sent me.” This is the sure foundation which God hath laid ; this the bond which unites all the members of that body, whereof Christ is the head ; which unites the primitive disciples with all who have believed, or shall believe, through their word, to the end of the world ; which unites the church militant on earth, with the church triumphant in heaven. Thus “ Godliness is profitable
 “ unto all things, having promise of the life
 “ which now is, and of that which is to
 “ come.” Thus every condition of life is regulated, improved, sanctified : Health and vigor are directed to useful exertion for the glory of God and the good of man, and the bed of languishing is smoothed and cheered : affluence and success are secured from vanity, sinful indulgence, and forgetfulness of God ; and poverty, disappointment and distress are preserved from sinking into despair. Thus the interests of time and of eternity, so opposite in themselves, are made perfectly consistent, and

strengthen and support each other. And thus an obscure carpenter's son of Nazareth in Galilee, the instructor of a little handful of fishermen, who understood neither themselves nor their master, has actually done more toward ameliorating the character and condition of the human race, than all the sages, legislators, and sovereigns that ever existed: he has diffused a light over human life unknown before; he has given a universality to the moral principle which was before cramped by personal, political regards; and has, by giving due weight to every worthy temporal interest; established those of eternity on their native unshaken basis. We "speak as unto wise men, judge ye what we say."

The next Lecture, with the permission of Providence, will be an attempt to prove, That the religion of the gospel is the strongest and sweetest cement of human society; and therefore an object of serious attention to every one who wishes to maintain domestic peace, who wishes to see his country prosper, who would see the human race happy, who considers transient objects as part of the plan of Providence,

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Providence, and who, while he is in the world, uses it without abusing it, knowing that all these things shall be dissolved; and who is looking for "another country, that is "an heavenly, a city which hath foundations, "whose builder and maker is God." It will give me pleasure to meet you, for this purpose, this day fortnight, the 25th of the present month. May God accompany with his rich and powerful blessing all the means of instruction and of improvement, and to the Father, to the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the one living and true God, be ascribed the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

11. 7. 1941

11. 7. 1941

LECT. X.

MATT. VI. 10—12.

*Thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth,
as it is in heaven;
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our debts as we forgive our
debtors.*

“**G**ODLINESS is profitable unto all
“ things, having promise of the life
“ that now is, and of that which is to come.”
Supposing Christianity to have made no discovery of a future existence; supposing life and immortality not to have been brought to light by the gospel; what unspeakable obligations is the world laid under to it, for the present comfort which it administers, for the light which it diffuses, and the security which it bestows? Unhappily we are but too much under the influence of temporal views and motives,

motives, and too much disposed to sacrifice, to these, unbounded prospects, and immortal interests; but we are not permitted by the law of our nature, nor by the spirit of religion, to be insensible to the obligations, nor indifferent to the occurrences, of our present state. In no ~~one~~ respect does the religion of Jesus Christ more approve its divine original, ~~than in its~~ gracious tendency to promote the felicity, and to preserve the order of human society. It is, indeed, deeply to be lamented, that this first of blessings to mankind has been perverted and abused to the vilest and most inhuman purposes; but who can affirm, with a shadow of truth, that any species or degree, I will not say of atrocity, of cruelty, but of coldness or unkindness, is authorized, or countenanced by the gospel? Who, on the contrary, can deny, that the Author and Finisher of the Christian faith, in his doctrine, in his conduct, by his miracles, has strengthened the bands of nature, impressed the obligations of social duty, and that in so far as the power of his religion is felt, understood, and in activity, the state of the world is proportionably ameliorated, and earth so far resembles heaven?

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The business of the present Lecture, then, will be an attempt to prove, That the religion of the gospel is the sweetest and most powerful cement of human society, and therefore an object of the most serious concern to every one who wishes to maintain domestic peace, to enjoy national prosperity, and to contribute to the improvement and felicity of mankind,

Though every man be a separate creation of God ; a world within himself, placed in a peculiar sphere, and subjected to an individual responsibility ; yet every man is, at the same time, more intimately or more remotely connected with intelligent beings of various orders, from whom he derives, and to whom he communicates, existence, information, joy, sorrow ; in whose destiny his own is involved ; from whom he cannot detach himself even in thought, through the whole extent of his duration. This mutual relation, and its corresponding affections, are the work of the Father of Spirits, for the wisest and most gracious of purposes. According as they are cultivated or infringed, man rises into the angel, or degenerates into the demon. The social

social principle has got deeply rooted in our hearts, long before we are conscious of it : it “ grows with our growth, and strengthens “ with our strength ;” it accompanies us through life, and even in death forsakes us not. It collects the intelligence, the exertions of the savage tribes ; and it constitutes the glory and the felicity of polished life. But with all this, the world has often been reduced to a desert ; cruel prejudices, clashing interests, ungovernable passions have encroached on the social instinct, enfeebled it, destroyed it. Streams of blood have flowed from age to age. At the close of the eighteenth century, learned, civilized, Christian Europe, alas, is as ferocious and implacable, as in the rudest ages of our rude pagan ancestors. Where lies the blame ? The religion which we profess breathes “ peace on earth, and good will “ among men.” But we are not under the power of that religion. The spirit of Christianity enters not into, directs not, controls not the counsels of the princes, and of the nations, which avail themselves of its venerable name. Hence wars and fightings, and every evil work. Hence in subordinate associations,

ciations, faction, cabal, intrigue; men hating one another, envying one another, supplanting one another; hence, in private families, discord, jealousy, strife; “ a man at variance
“ against his father, and the daughter against
“ her mother, and the daughter-in-law against
“ her mother-in-law, and a man’s foes they
“ of his own household.” But the religion, which has been loaded with the reproach of such enormities, unequivocally disavows and condemns them. Let us look into it, mark its native tendency, imbibe its spirit, and learn to “ be kindly affectioned one towards another,
“ with brotherly love forgiving one another.”

The source of all public union, is conjugal and filial affection. Here we are to look for the nursery of virtue, the foundation of social strength and importance, the glory of states and kingdoms. If the fountain be poisoned, the stream, through every ramification, must be corrupt. And what has Christianity not done to purify this fountain, to give solidity to this foundation? It has restored the institution of marriage to its primitive simplicity, equity and obligation. The legislator of the
Jews

Jews laid down, it is true, the original law of God and nature, with clearness and precision, but the character of the wayward people whom he governed, rendered a strict interpretation and observance of that law difficult, and induced him to relax in certain particular cases: but the Christian law-giver, who came indeed to make atonement for transgression and to reconcile the guilty, abates not in a single iota the authority of the law; with the purity and dignity becoming his high character, he re-establishes the ordinance of heaven, which will not, cannot bend to humor the passions and the interests of changing mortals. The letter of the law went no farther than to restrain men from the grosser acts of violation; but the spirit of the law, according to its divine interpreter, places a guard over the eyes, over the thoughts, over the heart, and secures domestic peace and honour on the immoveable basis of religion.

Is it without design that the great Teacher sent from God so frequently represents Deity to us, under the endearing character of Father?

○ no, this relation first exalts us to heaven;
and

and then sends every man to his own home, to his own bosom. The parent is admonished of the wisdom needful to direct his conduct in managing the important trust committed unto him. He is admonished of the tenderness, the compassion, the patience, the forbearance, the forgiveness, which uninstructed, feeble, helpless, perverse children stand in need of. He learns to be merciful, as his Father in heaven is merciful. The child, drawn with the bands of a man, with cords of love, beholds in the superior intelligence, in the care, the affection, the vigilance of an earthly parent, an emanation from the pure fountain of all good; a sense of dependance, of obligation is produced; the heart overflows with gratitude. All parties are reciprocally endeared to each other: they are twice blest, blest in what they give, and in what they receive. The will of God is "done on earth, as it is done in heaven."

With what heavenly wisdom does our divine master mould the relative duties of life into a devotional form, and thereby gives them life, energy, elevation? While we pronounce, from
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one mouth, the solemn address, “ *Our Father,*” all bitterness and wrath die within us; a common relation and interest are clearly discerned, and powerfully felt; the spirit of love glows in every breast. Dare we utter the petition read at the opening of this discourse, “ *Thy will be done,*” with a consciousness of habitually neglecting or resisting the known will of God; with a disposition to disturb the peace of society; with the dreadful imputation of kindling a hell upon earth? No, a sense of the divine presence overawes the mind; our spirit and practice must not contradict our prayers. What we earnestly implore at a throne of grace, it will be our earnest endeavour to obtain and realize. Was it without meaning and design that Jesus gave the world a glimpse of himself, at the age of twelve years, in the maturity of wisdom blended with the simplicity of the child: and that after filling with astonishment “ *at his understanding and answers,*” all who heard him, he meekly and modestly retired from the temple with his parents, and “ *went down with them, and came to Nazareth,*” and was subject to them?” What a mild lesson

lesson to tender ingenuous youth, of that subordination without which no society can subsist, of the respect due to parental feelings, to parental authority; of the submission, resignation and restraint which the condition of human life imposes on our early inexperienced years? Was it without design that, in the course of his public ministry, little children obtained such a share of his attention, drew down his benediction, were proposed by him as a pattern to the aged; that he made this emphatical declaration concerning them: “ I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven:” “ take heed that ye despise not one of them.” “ It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.” What a check to the projects of pride, avarice and ambition, which directs so often the parental heart, in making provision for children; what a reproof of inattention to their spiritual interests; what a stimulus to lay up for them treasures in heaven?

How many instances stand on this record; of the condescending interest which the friend of mankind took in the conservation, or restoration, of domestic comfort and happiness? Witness the miraculous cure of the centurion's servant, of Peter's mother-in-law, of the woman of Canaan's daughter, of the poor man's lunatic son: Witness his habits of intimacy with the affectionate family of Lazarus and his sisters, and the glory which he manifested at the marriage of Cana in Galilee. Witness the resurrection of the widow's son of Nain, of the ruler Jairus's daughter, of Lazarus after he had been in the grave four days. Above all, witness that affecting display of friendship and of filial duty and affection, in the midst of dying agony: "When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy Son. Then saith he to the disciple, behold thy mother; And, from that hour, that disciple took her unto his own home." But this sympathy with domestic feeling was totally exempted from a participation in the prejudices and partialities of parental weakness, or in the com-

complaints of peevishness. The mother of Zebedee's children met with a repulse when she presumed to solicit undue distinction for her two sons; and Martha received little encouragement to repeat an accusation of her sister's unkindness.

When the whole is taken together, is it possible to deny, that there is here a self-evident tendency to improve society at its very source, that in so far as the little communities, which are the constituent parts of the great family of the human race, enter into these views, are actuated by this spirit, and continue united by this bond, the state of the world at large is amended. And when this becomes universal, oh that the period might in mercy be hastened! The petition which Christ has taught his disciples to put up, will be crowned with an answer of peace. Thus the direct object of Christianity is to confirm, and to strengthen obligations which are interwoven in the constitution and frame of our nature, which the heart joyfully recognizes, and which the conscience approves. What a blessed object, to support the conjugal union by the sanctions

of religion, the exercises of devotion, the prospects of immortality! What is it to keep alive the sacred fire of paternal and filial affection, by constant supplies from the altar of God; and to establish the great law of love among brethren on the basis of Christian charity, that "love of Christ which passeth knowledge!" It is unnecessary to rise to a higher scale of human life, and to embrace a wider range of society; for if the component parts be sound and uniform, they will readily coalesce and adhere: if the same spirit pervades the whole, there will be no difference but that of greater and less. Every family will be an epitome of its village or city; every city of its province, each province, of the empire, and all the kingdoms of the world will then be one great "kingdom of our God and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

But, in this state of imperfection, it needs must be that offences come. The state of society must be disturbed; the selfish, the proud, the implacable spirit of this world will arise, and Christianity must have to deplore, that
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its precepts, however reasonable, its genius, however mild, its designs, however gracious and beneficent, are borne down by a torrent of angry or interested passions. But even in this unhappy case the gospel gives not all up for lost. It makes provision for the worst that can happen. As the object of the first prayer which we have been meditating, is the preservation and extension of social joy, so that of the other is the restoration of it when lost, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us." Mark, as we go along, the petition "give us this day our daily bread," which expresses the anxiety of the individual about personal subsistence, blends even that with social affections. Even daily bread has no sweetness if eaten in solitude; it is for another, whom he loves as his own soul, that man implores the blessing of food. There is more than one concerned in asking it, more than one in receiving, more than one in giving God thanks. And see, with what knowledge of the human heart, it is placed between a prayer which would make earth resemble heaven, and one which

would bring heaven back to earth, if unhappily it had withdrawn.

When offence has taken place, there is in human nature a dreadful propensity to perpetuate and extend it. The mind broods over it, and it finds its way to the tongue; a stranger intermeddles with it. The breach is widened, the spark becomes a conflagration, very friends are separated. Whence is all this? The religion of Jesus Christ was not resorted to, his authority was not felt. Reconciliation hung on one quavering note, and the tongue was too proud to give it utterance. In some codes of morality, revenge has been exalted to the rank of virtue, and in the most ancient and most respectable of heathen poems, the unrelenting resentment of a high-minded individual is the prominent and favourite feature of the piece. But this has no place, no not for a moment, in the Christian system. The heart, the eye, the tongue, the hand, of the disciple of Jesus, all, all are bound up; and the offence is done away, not by the savage running down his prey, and drinking the blood of his victim, but by the sacrifice

sacrifice of his own gall, by a victory over his own spirit. Next to a state of undisturbed harmony, of uninterrupted love, the most desirable surely is the sweetness of reconciliation, the re-union of souls which ought not to have been separated. The state of human nature not admitting of the first, the gospel has done all that could be done, in procuring for us the second. Alienated from God by nature and wicked works, we are reconciled by the blood of his Son. Hateful and hating one another, we are brought within the bond of the same covenant, and are no more strangers and foreigners to each other, but fellow citizens of the saints, and of the household of God.

Reconciliation is the felicity peculiar to man. Angels never left their first estate, never knew the misery of distance and displeasure, cannot taste the delight of being brought nigh, of being restored to favour. Demons are implacable, irrecoverable, "re-served in everlasting chains under darknesses." Man, though cast down, is not destroyed. From this source his happiness flows, "Being justified by faith we have peace with

“ God, and rejoice in hope of the glory of
“ God.” This is the leading idea of the
whole gospel dispensation; “ God in Christ
“ reconciling the chief of sinners unto him-
“ self, not imputing unto men their tref-
“ passes.” Under its sacred influence, behold
men sinking all the animosity of the carnal
mind toward each other, in “ bowels of
“ mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind,
“ meekness, long-suffering;” “ forbearing
“ and forgiving even as Christ forgave.”
And here, as in the former instance, our blessed
Lord moulds the precept into a prayer. In-
stead of enforcing obedience by argument, or
of terrifying into compliance by multiplying
threatenings against the resentful, the unmer-
ciful, he prostrates us together, as miserable
offenders, in the presence of God, and makes
the relenting of our own minds, the melting
of our own hearts towards others, the standard
of our supplication to God, and the measure
of our expectation from him. “ Forgive us
“ our debts as we forgive our debtors.”
What a solemn appeal! It forms an essential
part of the devotional service of our national
church: It is frequently employed by all de-
nominations.

nominations of professing Christians. How well ought it to be weighed! Who would not shudder at the thought of such a prayer uttered by the lips of an austere, revengeful, inflexible character? Such an one indirectly imprecates vengeance on his own head. What shall become of him, if he is dealt with as he deals by others? "He shall have judgment without mercy who hath shewed no mercy." But the word, the example, the spirit of Christ subdue every high thought, bring back men to one another, and bring them together unto God. I will no longer limit my beneficence to a narrow standard; "How often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him, until seven times?" I will not take my fellow-servant by the throat, for a debt of a few pence, saying, "pay me that thou owest," while I am supplicating to be released from a debt of ten thousand talents which I am utterly unable to pay. I will remember the words of Jesus: "I say not unto thee until seven times; but until seventy times seven."

In

In these two ways the spirit, and the precepts, and the practice of Christianity, manifestly tend to support human society; by preventing discord, by rendering still more amiable and dear to each other, those who already are so; by making the ordinary duties of life not a heavy yoke imposed, but a voluntary, a reasonable, a pleasant, a religious service; by drawing down the temper and dispositions of heaven, to inspire and regulate the intercourse and pursuits of men upon earth: And where, unhappily, love has been interrupted, by hastening to re-establish it, in the exercise of patience, in the spirit of meekness, in the bowels of kindness and tender mercy: in this assurance, that the noblest triumph which a man can obtain, is one over himself; that he who is taught in the school of Christ to subdue his own spirit is invincible, as a prince he has power with God and with man, and shall prevail.

All that has been said respecting the influence exercised by Christianity on domestic union, might be extended, circle after circle, to every religious, every civil community.

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Let each of us endeavour to feel, and to act under, the obligation annexed to our own peculiar sphere. Let inclination here co-operate with the appointments of Providence, the regulations of well-ordered society, and the plainest dictates of religion. Your reward even in this world is sure. For if the spirit of Christ Jesus carries you usefully and successfully through these labours of love, you have secured a heaven upon earth; or should you have the affliction to fail, should you have to struggle with the overwhelming reflection that your "house is not so with God," you shall have the testimony of conscience bearing you witness that you made it your endeavour to "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," and "the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your heart and mind through Jesus Christ."

The next Lecture, to be delivered, if God permit, this day fortnight, March 11th, will be an attempt to shew, That the gospel of Christ is the only satisfactory interpretation of the great mystery of Providence.

From

From what has now been said, ingenious youth will be instructed, that it is a very high privilege to address their heavenly Father in prayer; and to cherish and support kind affections, toward all with whom they are connected, by the spirit of piety and devotion. They will discern that the exercises of religion have a happy influence on the duties, and the enjoyments of individual, and of social life. They will become sensible that in proportion as the obligations of Christianity are understood and felt, their relative situation will be improved. They will become more amiable in the eyes of others, and be more disposed to love, serve and oblige those with whom Providence has united them. In other words, they will see it to be their highest interest here, as well as hereafter, to have their temper and conduct regulated by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Wherever Christianity exerts its genial power, the social principle is strengthened and purified. The family in which it resides becomes a Bethel, "the house of God, the gate of heaven." The conjugal tie waxes stronger and stronger, from the prospect of
immor-

immortality, from the approach of that state wherein both parties shall be “as the angels of God in heaven.” The paternal and filial duties and affections are regulated and refined. Authority is exercised without feverity, and submitted to without murmuring. The servant and his master acknowledge, love, and serve one master, even Christ. Should offence come, and discord arise, the spirit of the blessed Jesus withdraws the fuel, and the fire goes out. A kingdom under this influence, would be one great family, a band of brothers, “dwelling together in unity,” among themselves, and invincible from without: the fabled age of gold would be restored, and the paradisiacal state would commence. “Great voices” shall at length be heard “in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.” “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”



LECT. XI.

JOHN I. 1—5.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word
was with God, and the Word was God.*

The same was in the beginning with God.

*All things were made by Him; and without
Him was not any thing made that was made.*

*In Him was life; and the life was the light
of men.*

*And the light shineth in darkness; and the
darkness comprehended it not.*

REV. I. 17.

I am the first and the last.

ROM. xv. 13.

*Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and
peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope
through the power of the Holy Ghost.*

THOUGH

THOUGH we derive all our knowledge from objects which affect our senses, those are the most interesting objects which do not fall under the cognizance of sense. The being whom I call my friend is surely something more than a figure of such a form and stature, endowed with the power of uttering articulate sounds, and of assuming placid and agreeable looks. These are indeed the means whereby he makes himself known to me, but the real object of my affection is not what I see, and hear, and touch; it is the vivifying, immaterial principle, communicating itself to a similar principle in me: and this communication can be kept up though the diameter of the globe interpose, nay though the spirit may have escaped from the clay tabernacle. The sounds which reach my ear are merely a tremulous motion excited in the air, but they awaken my soul to rapture, and the recollection of them renews the rapture a thousand and a thousand times. The characters traced on that bit of paper are mute and lifeless, but I discern in them the spirit of life of the man whom I love; I can read his heart

heart in what the tongue dictated, or the fingers drew. "There is a spirit in man; the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding." And as man has the power of communicating himself to man, with the rapidity of lightning, so the Father of spirits, in a thousand ineffable ways, can make himself known to the spirits whom he hath made. "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which actually exist, even his eternal power and Godhead." As I am sure of the existence of my friend, and of his moral and intellectual endowments, the moment I hear him speak, or observe the glance of his eye, or read his letter, I am equally assured of the existence and perfections of the invisible God, by looking around me, or when I open this volume, and when I commune with my own heart.

But infinity attaches to every thing that relates to Deity. It is the perfection of human friendship to be free from all mystery, from all concealment, to have every thing in com-

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mon; and the parties being limited beings, full communication is easily practicable. But the communications of Deity must of necessity be at once luminous and obscure, plain and mysterious. Human friendship needs no mediator, no interpreter; it is marred, sometimes destroyed, by interference. But there can be no friendship between God and man except through a mediator. Thus alone it can be formed at first, and thus alone it can be maintained and supported. And such a Mediator, from the very nature of the thing, must possess the character of both parties. As "children are partakers of flesh and blood," "he also himself likewise took part of the same. He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham"—being, at the same time, "the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person," "being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." By this union of nature he is completely qualified to "be a merciful and faithful high-priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of

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“ of the people.” It was not necessary that there should be a divinely commissioned interpreter of nature, for nature presents uniform appearances, seen and understood of all men. The works of creation were perfected at once, and continue to be what they were from the beginning; but every succeeding instant exhibits a new providential arrangement, which the human understanding is unable to fathom or explain; but which it is of high importance for man to understand. In condescension to human weakness, ignorance, and wretchedness, it pleased God to raise up a succession of public instructors, to call men to attend to the ways of Providence, and to unfold its mysteries; to record events past, and to announce what Deity was about to do. “ At sundry times, “ and in divers manners, God spake in time “ past unto the fathers by the prophets;” who besides local and temporary objects, united in holding up to the world one great, universal, unchanging object, to which all referred, and by which all was explained. He “ hath in these last days spoken unto us by “ his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of “ all things, by whom also he made the “ worlds.” Thus a uniformity of design is

manifested and maintained, and, amidst all the fluctuating, inefficient purposes and attempts of men, one grand purpose of "Him who worketh" "all things after the counsel of his own will," has been undeviatingly going forward, and is advancing toward perfection. The gospel is the solution of all the difficulties which the course of providence presents: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

1. The Son of God is the great interpreter of the Eternal Mind in his character of Creator of the universe. The world is but of yesterday. It could not have produced itself. It cannot be the effect of chance. How came it thus? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." This intimates that a plan was from eternity formed, of which the fabrick that we behold is the execution; and it proves that he who is emphatically called "the Word," was the sole and supreme agent in this great work. When we view a beautiful

tiful and useful piece of mechanism, when we read an ingenious and instructive book, we become acquainted with the author, we see his mind in his performance, we admire and love him; we become wise through his wisdom, and strong in his strength. Such is the medium expanded between us and an unseen Jehovah. Thus the great teacher has brought Deity down to our perception. This is the stupendous machine which he has constructed, this the wonderful volume he has written. All these tell us what God is; the almighty, all-wise, all-gracious first cause, and last end, of every thing that exists; thus “ the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, hath declared him” to us. Creation was not completed till man was formed, and man was destined to be the brightest image of God here below. Man alone of terrestrial beings is conscious of his own existence, he alone is capable of knowing the hand which formed him. He discerns Deity not only in a creation without him, and round about him, but in his own person, in every particle of his body, and especially in the powers of his soul. Man was crowned with glory and honour, because in due time the

Son of God was to become man, that he might redeem his creature man. "In him" is life, and the life is the light of men; "He is the true light which lighteth every" man that cometh into the world."

2. History is the record of the divine conduct, and without christianity it were utterly inexplicable. When we consider historical events as the result of human counsels, we are perplexed and confounded. We see nothing but clashing interests, half-formed designs, impotent and perishing efforts. We behold empires formed and falling to pieces as if by accident; a huge discordant chaos, not a beautiful and regular structure. But viewed as the operation of infinite wisdom, a new light is diffused over the face of the mighty deep, the discordant particles unite, and a heap of dry bones start up into a mighty army. We see men without knowing each other, and without concert, actually co-operating; and, under the controlling influence of heaven, accomplishing purposes not their own, frequently the very opposite of what they had formed. In the sacred history alone we have
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a continued series of facts the most valuable, and the most universally interesting, and they all relate to the same commanding object which was proposed to man from the beginning, which has been kept constantly in view, and has lost nothing of its weight or lustre by length of duration. What that object was, and is, you need not to be told. The world was created and is supported to serve as a theatre for displaying the work of redemption; and new heavens and a new earth shall arise to unfold its everlasting glories.

They little understand the true nature and character of Christianity, who consider it as unknown to the world till the times of Augustus Cæsar. Jesus Christ says of himself, "before Abraham was I am," and his testimony is confirmed by every iota of the Mosaic history, and of the Jewish economy. The apostle of the Gentiles refers us to three very distant periods of the Old Testament church for a proof of the Messiah's pre-existence, and of his universal character as the Saviour of mankind, whether Jews or Gentiles. "Now I say, that Jesus Christ was a

“ minister of the circumcision for the truth
“ of God, to confirm the promises made unto
“ the Fathers : and that the Gentiles might
“ glorify God for his mercy ; as it is written,
“ For this cause I will confess to thee among
“ the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name : And
“ again he saith, Rejoice ye Gentiles with his
“ people : and again, Praise the Lord, all ye
“ Gentiles, and laud him all ye people : and
“ again Esaias saith, There shall be a root of
“ Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over
“ the Gentiles ; in him shall the Gentiles
“ trust.” The passages here quoted from
Moses, from the Psalmist, from Isaiah,
clearly prove that, at three very different pe-
riods of the Jewish church, the leading design
of Providence was expressly announced, and
that full and explicit intimation was given
of an approaching great deliverance, not to
the Jews only, but to the Gentiles also ; and it
cannot admit of a doubt, that the deliverance
to which they refer, is that which Jesus Christ
effected by his incarnation, life, death, and re-
surrection. Here, then, the gospel sheds a
cheering light on the mystery of Providence,
and on the history of mankind, in the con-
curring

curing and express declarations which He, "at sundry times and in divers manners," made to the world, respecting the person and work of the Redeemer. In farther illustration of this branch of my subject, I shall take the liberty of transcribing what I have advanced, to the same effect, on another occasion.

Not to insist on that first and general prediction, concerning the "seed of the woman," who was to be "the bruiser of the serpent's head," let us advance to the period when God began to reduce into a particular form, and system his purpose of good will to men; that is, when Abraham, at the age of seventy-five years, was called of God from his kindred and habitation; was separated not only from his idolatrous neighbours, but from his own nearest relations; was sent into a state of perpetual banishment, childless, and beyond all hope or probability of progeny; and yet, under all these disadvantages, was constituted and declared the heir of the promise, the progenitor of that illustrious Saviour, in whom at length, "all the families of the earth should be blessed."

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From that moment, we see a fence planted around the Patriarch and his family, which the violence of hostile surrounding states was not able to break through, nor the revolutions of neighbouring kingdoms to pluck up, nor the wastes of all-devouring time to impair, till the designs of heaven were accomplished.

In all the subsequent events which affected this family and their descendants—their various conditions and places of residence—the declarations made to them—the observances enjoined them—the changes of their government, from its establishment to its annihilation—all kept in view the object presented to their venerable ancestors—the MESSIAH, or SHILOH, to whom “the gathering of the people should be.” That men, living so remote from each other in point of time, and under such various aspects of Providence, should be led to consider one and the same object as possessing a supereminent excellency and importance, and, however differing in other respects, to find them in perfect union here, is not to be accounted for on the usual principles of human nature, nor from the ordinary

dinary current of human affairs; and therefore can proceed only from the Lord of hosts, who is “wonderful in counsel, and excellent “in working.”

If it be asked, Wherein consists the credibility of that record, which conveys the knowledge of these things to us? It may be answered, That this very harmony and consistency will be admitted as no inconclusive argument, by the candid and unprejudiced. To those who believe a superintending Providence, in the administration of the affairs of this world, the truth and importance of these sacred Oracles will be at once demonstrated, from the care which that Providence has evidently exercised over them, in guarding them not only from external danger, but also from internal corruption. To what remote antiquity must we recur for the origin of the earliest of these sacred Books? Through what a long extended line, must we pursue their progress, till they were completed? From how many accidents have they been preserved? How many generations of men have they outlived? How many revolutions
of

of the world have they withstood, and escaped? The persons who were divinely inspired to compose them, are long since departed. The men, and the nations, who often attempted to destroy them, have many ages ago been cut off from the face of the earth. That nation which was once the guardian and repository of them, is now dispersed and scattered abroad, and exhibits a striking and lasting monument, in its character and punishment, of the eternal, immutable truth of the Revelation of God to their forefathers. The languages, in which the Scriptures were originally written, are gone into disuse, except among the learned few. Nevertheless the word of **JEHOVAH** is an open treasure to every kindred, and people, and tongue. The wit of man has been employed against it, and it maintains its ground. The malice and power of men have attempted to crush it, and yet it remains in full vigor. The weakness of superstition, and the madness of enthusiasm have aimed at perverting it, but it still runs pure. The fury of successively contending parties, has tortured and wrested it to their several purposes, but, when their violence is extinguished and forgotten, it pre-

serves an awful, steady, and unpliant dignity. And the experience of the past, leaves us no room to doubt of its future stability and progress.

I shall add but one consideration more, under this part of the subject. The credibility of the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, as constituting a proof of the Gospel, will be put beyond a doubt, if we consider through what hands they have been transmitted to us. Can the Jews, the inveterate enemies of Christianity, the murderers of the Lord of glory, be suspected of a design of contributing toward the chief support of the Christian faith? Surely no!—But yet they have done it. Without seeing the end which God had in view, they carefully preserved the inspired books; they had them numbered to a line, nay to a single letter, to prevent all addition or diminution; and they have thereby, unknown to themselves, furnished the world with the clearest evidence of what they would willingly crush and destroy; and, to this day, they exhibit their own condemnation as the ground of their hope.

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If it be asked, farther, Why the knowledge, and possession, of the Scriptures, a matter of universal concern, were so long limited to a peculiar spot, and to a peculiar people? It may be answered, That in the very act of calling Abraham and his family, to the high honour of being the guardians of the divine Revelation, and the ancestors of our Saviour according to the flesh, an express intimation was given, that such distinction was not for their sake merely, but for the general good; that, at length, ALL Nations might be blessed in One who should descend from that particular family, and in consequence of promises and predictions which were, for a season, to be deposited with them, in behalf of the world at large. And the history, not only of that people, but of the surrounding and succeeding nations and empires, satisfyingly proves, how wisely, and how well, an end so benevolent was answered, by means, at first sight, so improbable.

That people “ to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of
“ God,

“ God, and the promises : Whose are the
“ fathers, and of whom, as concerning the
“ flesh, Christ came,” were, for many ages,
doomed to an unsettled, wandering state. They
travelled from country to country. They
were apparently suspended of Providence, as
a spectacle before the eyes of all the nations
whither they went, to warn them of the folly
and wickedness of idolatry, and to call them
to the living and true God.

The venerable patriarchs themselves were
early employed in this service. Abraham was
sent to Egypt, and afterward sojourned among
the Philistines. Isaac also lived all his life
long in the midst of Idolaters: and Jacob was
appointed to sojourn many years among the
Assyrians, for the purpose of conveying thither
the knowledge and the worship of the one
Supreme. And when it pleased God, at
length, to establish their posterity in a country
of their own, the spot which He chose was
the very centre of the great and extensive em-
pires which then divided the known world.
These empires, unknown to each other, were,
one after another, extending their conquests
and

and their boundaries, while the preparation of the Gospel of peace, was hastening to its maturity in the hands of a few Hebrew shepherds ; till, at length, the promised, the appointed, the expected, the seasonable hour, " the fulness of time " came, the Prince of peace appeared.

I shall mention some striking circumstances in the state of the world, at that period, tending to evince the special care which the divine Providence exercised over it, and to exhibit the evidence of Christianity which flows from it. While the arms of Greece, under Alexander the Great, as he is commonly styled, were reducing to subjection the eastern world, and adding the vast empires of Assyria and Persia to the Grecian ; Rome was, in the west, by violent, and rapid strides, hastening to universal dominion in Europe. And the fierce disputes which ensued upon the death of Alexander, which armed his successors one against another, and dismembered the large and unwieldy fabric of his kingdom, paved the way for the Roman standard, till it advanced from conquest to conquest, to plant
itself

itself in remotest Asia. And thus, immediately previous to the Christian era, half the globe had become subject to one power, and was combined in one mighty system of government, beyond comparison greater than the world ever saw before or since. To increase our wonder, in order to facilitate the introduction and diffusion, of the Gospel, the commotions of the nations suddenly subsided, the bloody portal of Janus was shut, and all was hushed into universal peace: and that, at a time when science shone in all her splendor, and when philosophy was seated upon the throne. Here, then, was a field wider than ever opened at any other time, in which truth was to expatiate, and a test was applied to it, which nothing but the truth could stand. And thus, He who *shakes the Heaven and the Earth, the Sea and the dry land, shook and settled all nations*, when the *desire of all nations* was to *come*. And hence, we are instructed, that the truth of God was bounded for a time, to prepare the way for its more unlimited extent afterwards; it was laid up in Judea, that thence, as from a centre, its light might diffuse itself over the whole Roman empire.

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And all this is of God, who alone “ knoweth
“ the end from the beginning, saying, My
“ counsel shall stand, and I will fulfil all my
“ pleasure.” For the establishment of your
faith, Christians, Alexander fought and con-
quered; Socrates and Plato taught; Augustus
made peace, and commanded the world to be
taxed; Isaiah and Daniel prophesied.

Such are the grounds of your faith and
hope in Christ, arising from the history and
state of the world previous to, and at the time
of, his appearance. We now advance to that pe-
riod itself; and shall consider, How far the per-
son whom we call Lord and Master, answered
the expectation formed of him, and fulfilled
the predictions spoken concerning his person,
character and office; and shall examine the
proofs which he personally exhibited of his
being the Messiah.

It is an acknowledged principle of natural
Religion, That, from the known wisdom and
mercy of God, his creatures in distress have
reason to expect relief; but, the time and
manner of granting such relief, they must not
take

take upon themselves to determine, but leave it to that Wisdom which is the ground of their hope. Previous, then, to an intimation from Heaven, Who could have said, by whom, and in what manner, He was to work deliverance for his miserable and guilty creatures? Such an intimation He was graciously pleased early to give, as the encouragement of our hope; and now, that the great work of redemption is finished, we can discover a fitness and propriety in the means employed, and a light is thrown on the mystery of Providence, though we durst not presume to say what these ought to have been, until they were discovered to us.

The person who came upon the merciful errand of salvation, was God's own eternal Son, humbled to our level, made a partaker of our meanness and misery, but totally free from our guilt. In such a deliverer, then, we behold One, who, we have reason to believe, would enter thoroughly into our case, from the near relation which he bore to us, and who, at the same time, could suffer no impediment nor interruption in his benevolent

work, from any necessary attention to his own private interest; One, placed in a station where he could set us a perfect example of all holiness, and possessing a nature wherein he could, by death, make a full atonement for sin; and, at the same time, in virtue of a superior nature, give value to that atonement, remove the curse which was in full force against his guilty brethren, whom he came to save, and, through death, open to them the way which leads to eternal life. Then, and never till then, was fully understood the meaning of those bloody sacrifices which were, from time to time, offered up to appease divine justice; and of that, and such like expressions, “without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.” And here we also discover the reason why Christ is in Scripture denominated “the Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world.”

But again, the arrival of Jesus Christ did not take the world by surprize. The sending of his Son into our world, was no new and sudden intention of the everlasting Father, in the four-thousandth year from the creation; but

but it was a deliberate purpose, formed before all worlds, and declared to man, the instant his condition required a Saviour. That declaration was repeated, and was rendered clearer and fuller, as time rolled on, till it became so pointed and particular, as to leave candid minds, who were informed of it, no room to hesitate concerning the application, when the object of the heavenly Revelation actually appeared.

To adduce only one or two out of that cloud of witnesses, which prove Jesus Christ to be He, of whom God spake to the Fathers by his servants the prophets, let me refer you to Israel's dying bed, and dying words, in the blessing which he pronounced upon Judah his fourth son: "The sceptre shall not depart
" from Judah; nor a law-giver from between
" his feet, until Shiloh come: and unto him
" shall the gathering of the people be:" These words were spoken as long *before* Christ's day, as it is from it down to the present period. Jacob's whole family consisted then of no more than seventy souls, and these driven, by famine, for subsistence into a

strange land; and that land soon proved a house of bondage to them. Six hundred years, and more, elapse, before a king is known at all in Israel; and when one is at length chosen, not the tribe of Judah but of Benjamin furnishes the sovereign. When that tribe was, after so long a delay, called at length to the regal dignity, the youngest son of a younger family is placed on the throne. In the third generation, the throne is shaken to the very foundation, and a violent revolution strips the crown of Judah of ten tribes, and erects a formidable rival kingdom. But this very revolution, instead of weakening or destroying the destined succession, serves only to illustrate and to ascertain it. In process of time, a hostile invasion plucks up the kingdom by the roots; and both prince and people are carried captive into an enemy's country. But yet, in the very wreck of empire, in the almost necessary dissolution which a seventy years captivity must produce, the existence of the state is preserved, and the royal line is maintained unbroken; and Judah is again miraculously established in his own land; till, at last, the kingdom changes a temporal

temporal for a spiritual head, in the person of the blessed Jesus. And, after so long a period, the sceptre at length departs from Judah, when the Jews themselves give up the right of judging, to a foreign power, and acknowledge they have no King but Cæsar;—thus proving the truth of God, in the appointment of Him whom they were zealous to deny.

The noted prediction of Moses, “ a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him ye shall hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you,” which is recorded in Deuteronomy xviii. 15. and applied by the Apostle to Jesus Christ, Acts iii. 22: The minute description of the material and particular circumstances of Christ’s death, as delivered by David in the 22d Psalm; of his death and burial, by Isaiah in the 53d Chapter of his prophecy—and of the precise time, and end, of his sufferings, defined by Daniel toward the end of chapter 9th. of his book, constitute so many distinct and separate proofs, in their exact correspondence with the events which took place, in the land of Judea, under

the administration of Pontius Pilate, that no one but our divine Master could be the object of these prophetic enunciations; and, united, they form such a weight of evidence, as nothing but inveterate and determined prejudice is able to withstand,

But our blessed Lord did not remain merely passive, in furnishing us with evidence whereon to build our faith. That we might place all confidence in him, as a Saviour, he claimed a divine original—he called himself the Son of God. And how was this claim supported? He did the works of God. He exercised an unlimited authority over the whole world of nature; over things visible and invisible. The prince of the power of the air fled at his command. The boisterous elements heard and obeyed his word. Disease, and death, and the grave, fulfilled his pleasure. To his penetrating eye the darkest recesses of the human heart stood unveiled, and hell itself could find no covering. To adduce proofs were superfluous to those who are accustomed to read the Gospel. And these things were not done in a corner, nor performed before persons who
were

were disposed to believe. The displays of this divine power were neither few nor doubtful, but were exhibited in the face of the sun, before multitudes of spectators, and of those not a few who were mortified and provoked with what they saw; who were under every disposition to detect and expose an imposture, had it existed, and who were not destitute of ability, or opportunity, for making every inquiry necessary to this purpose.

It will be said, That the evidence arising from miracles is good only to those, who were eye and ear witnesses of them. This would be to reduce historical evidence within a very narrow compass. In what a deplorable state of ignorance and uncertainty would the human mind be involved, were nothing to be considered as true and certain, but what falls under the cognizance of our own senses? In other cases, and Why not here? we rest, and act, on the evidence of credible witnesses who have undoubted access to right information. Concerning the existence, the character, the life and death of Socrates, nobody pretends to entertain a doubt. The same may be said
concern-

concerning the other sages, philosophers, moralists, and heroes of antiquity. And yet, I will appeal to the candor of the impartial Deist himself, whether the evidence, of which we are in possession, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, be not much more clear, full, direct, and unsuspicious, than that which respects any other name existing previous to, contemporary with, or even coming after, our Divine Master, down to the age which immediately precedes our own. Indeed the happy revolution which wrought the temporal deliverance of these kingdoms, an hundred and ten years ago, is an event not more clearly authenticated to me, than the decease which Christ accomplished at Jerusalem, for the salvation of a lost world, when Tiberius Cesar was Emperor of Rome, and Pontius Pilate governor of Judea. Unless, therefore, the ages past are to be reduced to an universal blank, unless dark oblivion is to draw her sable mantle over all preceding events, with her rude hand demolishing every venerable monument, with her malignant pencil blotting out each precious record; unless human knowledge is to be confined to the little circle in which every man expatiates,

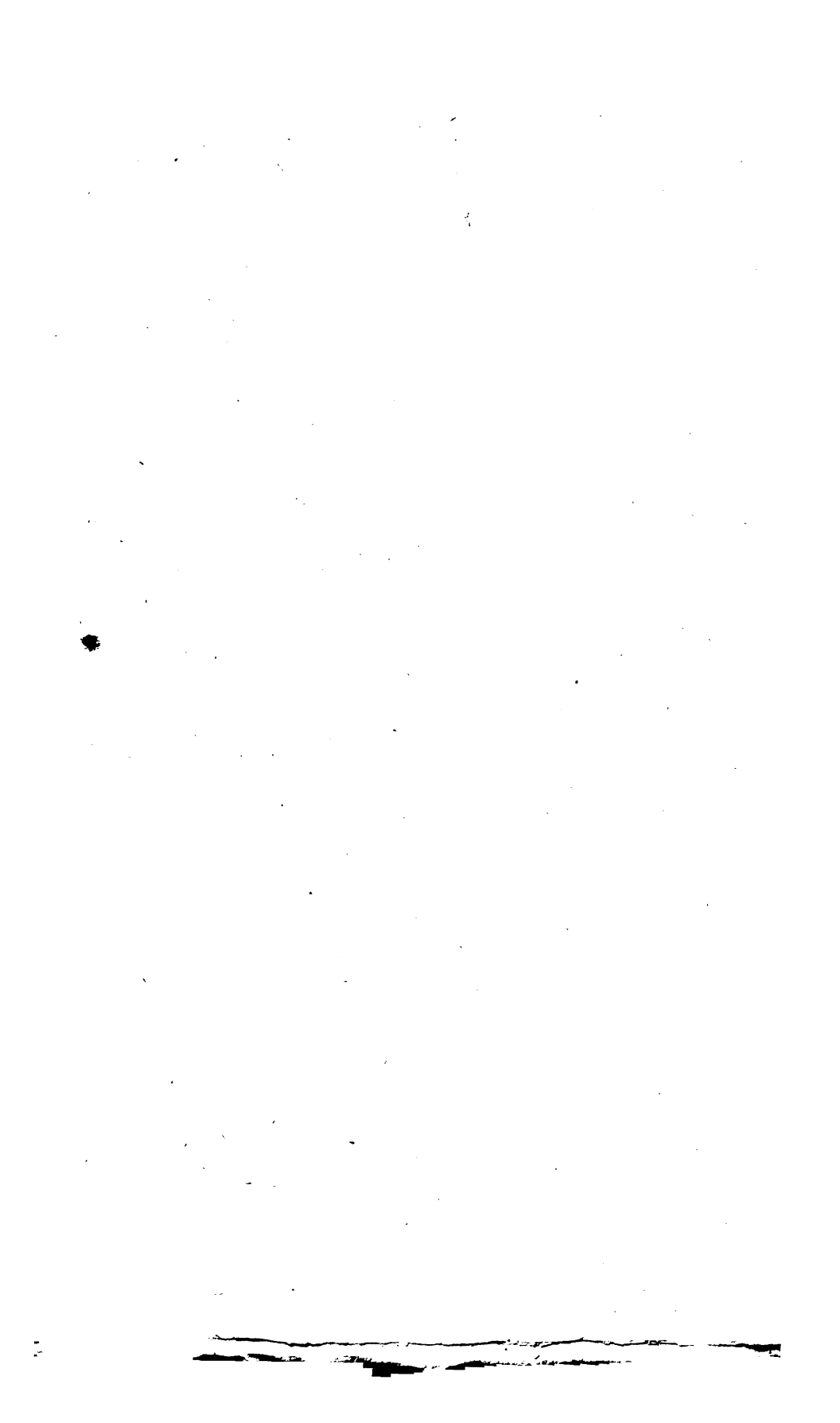
expatiates, to the few fleeting years which he spends upon earth, and to the slender, unimportant facts, which fall under his own observation,—and Who can bear to think of assenting to this? the truth, and the importance, of the Gospel, rest upon a rock, against which the folly, the madness, the desperate wickedness of man—against which *the gates of hell*, shall never prevail.

Thus we find Christianity diffusing light over the history of all ages and nations, and explaining many particulars of the divine conduct, which would otherwise have remained mysterious and unaccountable. And thus deeply do we stand indebted to the great Interpreter of the counsels of the eternal Mind, by whom God “made the worlds,” “whom he hath appointed heir of all things,” unto whom “all power is given, in heaven and in earth.” How can we discharge our debt of gratitude to him, but by walking in his light, by searching the Scriptures, by pondering the ways of Providence? Let us compare natural things with spiritual, and spiritual things with spiritual; and “the spirit
“ himself

“ himself will help our infirmities.” God has been pleased to establish an intimate relation between the careful and diligent use of appointed means, and the interposition and agency of his sovereign grace. To the humble and persevering inquirer what is difficult becomes easy, what is obscure becomes clear; before him “ every valley shall be exalted, “ and every mountain and hill shall be made “ low: and the crooked shall be made straight, “ and the rough places plain.” The day cometh when all that is now “ hard to be “ understood” in the word of God; all that is now inexplicable in the dispensations of Providence, shall be unfolded. What the wise and righteous Governor of the world doeth, in many cases we know not now, but we shall know hereafter. “ We know in part, and we “ prophecy in part: but when that which is “ perfect is come, then that which is in part “ shall be done away.” Then “ we all with “ open face, beholding as in a glass the glory “ of the Lord, shall be changed into the same “ image, from glory to glory, even as by “ the spirit of the Lord.”

Thy

Thy own lot, my friend, is, it may be, an enigma; thou "walkest in darkness, and "hast no light;" thou hast been led through intricate and mysterious paths; hast many a time been reduced to think, and to say; "All "these things are against me:" art now tempted to say, I must sink under this trial: "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord "hath forgotten me." Look to the Saviour, and be "lightened." "Trust in the name "of the Lord, and stay upon thy God." The enigma shall be resolved, and thou shalt be made to see, and to confess to the glory of God, that all was working together for thy good. Be patient, be resigned, and "hope "to the end;" and the "hope" of the Christian "maketh not ashamed."



LECT. XII.

JOHN XI. 23—26.

Jesus saith unto Martha, Thy brother shall rise again.

Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die: Believest thou this?

WHEN a beloved object is removed from us by death, we resign it slowly and reluctantly. The voice which has for many years vibrated delightfully on our ear, we are unwilling to believe is for ever silenced; we hang over the tremulous lips for a while, expecting when they shall move again, and utter the sounds which used to kindle the soul
to

to rapture. I have seen my friend asleep. The animated orbs, which told me quick as thought what he felt and understood, underwent an eclipse. I saw on his countenance the image of death, but rejoiced in the temporary suspension, because I knew it was going to restore invigorated animation and intelligence. But that was the sleep of death. These eyes are to open no more. I must "bury my dead out of my sight." Here nature leaves me to mourn; and philosophy offers a cold consolation which my heart rejects. Persuaded at length that I have lost what I loved, I purchase with Abraham a possession of a burying place; I erect with Jacob a pillar over my Rachael's grave; I inscribe with David on the monumental urn sacred to the memory of my Jonathan, "Lovely and pleasant in life, and in death undivided." But still I am not at rest. Was that blessing bestowed upon me only to be taken away? Was my cup thus sweetened only to render this infusion more bitter? What is left but that my gray hairs descend with sorrow to the grave?—Till "life and immortality were brought to light by the gospel," this was the sad estimate of
human

human existence; and a little cavity in the earth, or the ashes remaining from a funeral pile, settle the account between the parent and the child, between the husband and his wife, between a man and his brother. But now the dark valley is illuminated: the king of terrors is disarmed; my brother, my friend, my child is not dead, but sleepeth. "Let us also go and die with him." It is the glory of Christianity, after having instructed, regulated, sweetened the life that now is, to disclose a continuation of being which knows no period.

Many have, without the aid of revelation, agitated the question respecting the soul's immortality; but the body never came into consideration. It was given up as for ever lost; and one half of that nation to whom the lively oracles of God were committed, openly denied the existence of angels and spirits, and, consequently, the resurrection of the dead. But now we are emboldened to demand, as Paul did of king Agrippa, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" Why

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should

Should it be thought a thing incredible that He who, through a process of vegetation, rears the stately oak out of the putrid acorn, and, through progressive animation, transforms the incrustated worm into the gaudy butterfly, and the feeble, unthinking infant into the vigorous, intelligent man, should, for purposes still more noble, awake the slumbering dust to “ new-
“ nefs of life,” and “ change the vile body
“ that it may be fashioned like unto Christ’s
“ glorious body ?”

This is the “ mystery which was hid from
“ ages and generations,” which the learned and polite Athenians laughed to scorn, which the resurrection of the Lord Jesus has unfolded, and to which the believer in Jesus cleaves as
“ all his salvation and all his desire.” This, therefore, fills up the measure of God’s goodness to the children of men, and recommends the gospel to all who deplore the ravages of time and death, and “ who rejoice in hope of
“ the glory of God.”

But what is the evidence which Christianity furnishes of the immortality of the soul, and
of

of the resurrection of the body? We endeavoured in a former lecture to shew that the religion of Jesus is most happily adapted to the feelings, the necessities, and the expectations of the human heart, at every successive stage of our existence. It is eminently so in the case before us. There is a well-known propensity in man exciting a wish to repose, when dead, with those whom he loved in life. Even savage tribes venerate the sepulchres of their ancestors, and look with desire to them as their own. Jacob cannot die in peace till he has obtained assurance that he shall lie with his fathers, and be buried in their burying-place. Joseph exacts a similar security from his survivors, and expires giving "commandment concerning his bones," as if there were society in the grave. Mary, we find in the context, indulged a mournful pleasure in resorting to the grave of her departed brother, and in weeping over it; and Jesus mingles his tears with hers, sanctioning by this example of sympathy, the expression of a decent and moderated sorrow, which he was going to turn into joy. When, therefore, we behold Jesus visiting the house of mourn-

ing, weeping over the tomb of a friend, consoling the afflicted, the heart opens to the reception of a religion which meets its feelings, soothes them, relieves them; and which proves itself to be divine, by being thus accommodated to the nature of man. If it be natural to care for the body, how it is to be fed and clothed in life, and where, and with whom it is to be laid in death; if it be pleasant to meet with tenderness and sympathy, under the loss of what we loved as our own souls; then under what obligations are we laid to that "friend who sticketh closer than a brother," who not only makes the present support of our bodies his care, but has unveiled their future state of immortality; who not only vouchsafes to accompany the mourner to the tomb of departed worth, but to display the salvation of God in quickening the dead? The doctrine, and the proofs of immortality, are so interwoven with the texture of the gospel, that an attempt to separate them would be an attempt to destroy; and the difficulty attending the exhibition of them arises not from scantiness and inaptitude of materials, but from an abundance and luminousness which

which put selection to a stand. To preserve order in thought, and to assist recollection, we shall arrange what is further to be advanced on the subject, under the three following heads. 1. Explicit declarations of Jesus Christ respecting his own power over death. 2. Actual exertions of that power over others. 3. His own resurrection from the dead.

1. Jesus Christ made frequent and explicit declarations of his power over death. This was a pretension never advanced before by any prophet, public teacher, or leader of a party. Such men were indeed abundantly liberal in promises of the riches, honours and pleasures of this life, but who ever proposed as a recompence to his followers, a prolongation of being to perpetuity, exemption or deliverance from death; or who ever presumed to threaten his adversary with endless punishment, with an immortality of woe? “As the Father
“raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them,
“even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.”
“He that heareth my word, and believeth
“on him that sent me, hath everlasting life;

“ he is passed from death, to life ; ” “ the hour
“ is coming, and now is, when the dead
“ shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and
“ they that hear shall live. For as the
“ Father hath life in himself, so hath he
“ given to the Son to have life in himself ;
“ the hour is coming in the which all that
“ are in the graves shall hear his voice, and
“ shall come forth, they that have done good,
“ unto the resurrection of life ; and they that
“ have done evil, unto the resurrection of
“ damnation. Every one which seeth the
“ Son, and believeth on him, shall have ever-
“ lasting life : and I will raise him up at the
“ last day. This is the Father’s will which
“ hath sent me, that of all which he hath
“ given me, I should lose nothing, but should
“ raise it up at the last day.” And in the
verses read at the opening of the lecture,
“ Thy brother shall rise again ; I am the re-
“ surrection and the life ; he that believeth in
“ me, though he were dead, yet shall he live :
“ and whosoever liveth and believeth in me
“ shall never die, believest thou this ? ”

Of his empire over death, as it affected his
own person, the declarations are clear, manifold
and

and unequivocal, "I lay down my life, that
 " I might take it again. No man taketh it
 " from me, but I lay it down of myself. I
 " have power to lay it down, and I have
 " power to take it again." Among other
 proofs of his divine mission, this was to be
 the most illustrious, and he foretels it before it
 came to pass, " Destroy this temple,"
 speaking of the temple of his body, " and in
 three days I will raise it up." Now though
 some of the Jews affected to misunderstand
 his meaning, and others wilfully misrepresented it, it is certain that the chief priests and
 pharisees understood him well, and took their
 measures accordingly, for after his burial they
 " went to Pilate, saying Sir, we remember that
 " that deceiver said, while he was yet alive,
 " After three days I will rise again. Com-
 " mand therefore that the sepulchre be made
 " sure until the third day, lest his disciples
 " come by night and steal him away, and
 " say unto the people he is risen from the
 " dead. So the last error shall be worse
 " than the first." His death and resurrection
 were frequently the subject of conversation
 with his disciples, but they shrunk from it,

they believed him not. "Jesus began to shew
" unto them how he must go unto Jerusalem,
" and suffer many things of the elders, and
" chief priests, and scribes, and be killed,
" and be raised again the third day. Then
" Peter took him, and began to rebuke him,
" saying, be it far from thee Lord; this shall
" not be unto thee." At another time,
" while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto
" them, The Son of Man shall be betrayed into
" the hands of men, and they shall kill him,
" and the third day he shall be raised again :
" and they were exceeding sorry." The
same great event occupied the thoughts, and
constituted the theme, of Moses and Elias on
the mount of transfiguration, who " appeared
" in glory, and spake of his decease which
" he should accomplish at Jerusalem." And
as they came down from the mountain " he
" charged them that they should tell no man
" what things they had seen, till the Son of
" Man were risen from the dead; and they kept
" that saying within themselves, questioning
" one with another what the rising from the
" dead should mean." But was there no in-
timation of a resurrection previous to the ap-
pearance

pearance of Jesus Christ in the flesh? Yes, but it was not understood nor believed till the great Teacher came to open up the Scriptures. The Sadducees triumphed in the thought of putting a case which should reduce the doctrine of the resurrection to an absurdity, but they only furnished Him with an opportunity of exposing their ignorance and error, in “not knowing the Scriptures and the power of God,” and of deducing from Scripture a proof of what they meant to overturn. “As touching the resurrection of the dead, Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto him.” As the period approached, the notices of his death, and of “the glory that should follow,” became more and more pointed and distinct. “And Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him

“ him to death, and shall deliver him to the
“ Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to
“ crucify him; and the third day he shall
“ rise again.” Here he declares his power
not only over death, but over the concomitant
circumstances of it; as afterwards, in the very
agonies of death, he asserted and exercised a
power of conferring immortality, and of dis-
posing of seats in the paradise of God, in the
case of the penitent thief. But we proceed
in the

2. Second place to shew how these decla-
rations were supported; for had such extra-
ordinary powers been claimed, without being
exerted, who would have believed their ex-
istence? but, confirmed as they are by a mul-
titude of facts, operated in the presence of
clouds of witnesses, who shall dare to call them
in question? We shall first adduce the actual
exertions of the power of Jesus Christ over
death in others. They shew us the state of
death in four several gradations, manifesting
successively the empire of the Redeemer over
death in every state.

The

The first is the case of the ruler of the synagogue's daughter, a maid of about twelve years of age. Her father had left her in extremity, and went to supplicate Jesus in her behalf. While they are on the way to the house, she expires. There was hope, while life remained, that the interposition of Christ's miraculous power might effect a cure; but, with life, hope is extinguished; to restore the dead is considered as exceeding even his power, and a messenger is dispatched to announce the change which had taken place, and to prevent his taking unnecessary trouble. The case is given up as lost: the mournful offices of death have commenced when Jesus arrives. So convinced were all present that the spirit had left the body, that they rejected the idea of *sleep*, as an insult to their understanding. What must have been their astonishment; to behold her whom they had seen expire, whom they had laid out as dead, at a word revive, arise, walk, receive nourishment, recover not only life, but perfect soundness, from a mortal disease, in a moment? Of this the witnesses were neither few nor inconsiderable, nor of doubtful character. No wonder

that "the same thereof went abroad into all that land," and that it should have been transmitted to us as a ground of hope, and a source of joy.

The second instance is that of the widow's son of Nain, who was farther advanced in life, for in the history he is denominated "a man," and he had continued a longer time under the dominion of death, they were carrying him out to burial. The widowed mother of an only son would not be precipitate in performing these melancholy rites; the proofs of death must have been sadly satisfactory before she proceeded to pay this last debt of parental tenderness. It was so ordered of Providence, that Jesus came attended on this occasion with *many* of his disciples, and *much* people. The funeral procession from the city was likewise numerous. Of what fact is it easier to attain absolute certainty than that the signs of death are apparent? Here Jesus is moved, not by prayer, but by compassion; he interposes unsolicited, and as if he had been calling one out of a gentle slumber, says to the dead, "Young man, arise." The word

is

is armed with a quickening power, "he that
" was dead sat up, and began to speak."
Neither was this done in a corner, neither
could it be hid. "There came a fear on all,
" and they glorified God, saying, that a great
" prophet is risen up among us, and that God
" hath visited his people; and this rumor of
" him went forth throughout all Judea, and
" throughout all the region round about."
To this display of almighty power, among
other proofs of his divine mission, Jesus him-
self refers John Baptist, when he sent his dis-
ciples with this inquiry, "Art thou He that
" should come, or do we look for another?"
"Tell John what things ye have seen and
" heard; how that the blind see, the lame
" walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear,
" *the dead are raised*, to the poor the gospel
" is preached:" and what proof of Deity
can possibly exceed this?

The third exemplification of Christ's em-
pire over death, is the resurrection of Lazarus,
in the passage more immediately before us.
Here every thing is minute and impressive.
Jesus had lived in habits of peculiar friendship
with

with this man and his family. They were probably nearly of an age. Here then was a man dying in maturity of life, the well-known inhabitant of a populous village, not two miles distant from the metropolis of the country. The disease, whatever it might be that shortened life, was left to its course, and the offices of sympathy and friendship had been apparently neglected. But this seeming neglect has a wise and gracious design. The difficulty was not to prevent the disciples, through credulity, from imposing on others, but to produce conviction in themselves, of truths the most indubitable. Lazarus is left to die, and is miraculously restored to life, that they who were to be witnesses to others, might know the certainty of the things which they were to teach; that they themselves might be cured of unbelief. The sisters of Lazarus had learned from Christ, the doctrine of the resurrection at the last day, but seem not to have been acquainted with the two instances of anticipated resurrection just now mentioned, else it would have served as a plea, and as a foundation of hope, in their own case. They both agree in expressing regret at
Christ's

Christ's absence, and reflect on it as the cause why their brother died. Martha, indeed, rather hints than declares an expectation that Jesus would interpose in their behalf, but she immediately retracts it, and gives up the point, from the consideration that the body had been already four days in the grave. The many Jews who came to comfort the mourners, were of various characters and dispositions, as the event demonstrated, for some of them believed, and some of them went with a malevolent intention to the pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. What mountains, then, were in this case to be removed? Behold a grown man dead, and buried already four days: see men slow of heart to believe in the power and grace of their Master, disposed rather to die with their departed friend, than to entertain a hope of his revival: see two afflicted women, slowly resigning themselves to the will of Providence, and ceasing from all hope: see a multitude of partial, prejudiced spectators, with a mass of stone upon their hearts, much more ponderous than that which lay upon the grave of Lazarus. Behold the friend of mankind melted

melted into tears, as he surveys the ravages of sin and death, approving himself a man, before he assumes and exercises the mighty power of God. That power is directed and limited to its proper object. What human force can perform, it is called upon to perform. The all-powerful voice which cried aloud, "Lazarus come forth," could likewise have removed the stone, and loosed the prisoner when quickened; but human hands are sufficient for such purposes, and are accordingly employed. When we have done our part, and not till then, are we warranted to expect the interposition of a divine agency.

The fourth display of the Redeemer's power over death, is exhibited as an effect of his own resignation of life. "When he had
" cried again with a loud voice, he yielded
" up the ghost; and behold the vail of the
" temple was rent in twain, from the top to
" the bottom; and the earth did quake, and
" the rocks rent; and the graves were
" opened, and many bodies of saints which
" slept arose, and came out of the graves after
" his resurrection, and went into the holy
" city,

"city, and appeared unto many." Here we have the liberation of a great multitude, who had long been subject to the king of terrors, and probably had seen corruption; and the effect was produced not, as in the former instances, by an act of power, but out of seeming weakness. This weakness of death, however, is omnipotence itself. These sleeping saints feel its quickening power, these dry bones begin to stir, and to come together bone to its bone, and, preceded by him who is the "first fruits" of them that sleep," assume a new and more glorious form, fashioned like to Christ's glorious body. Then was fulfilled the word which he spake, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." Thus, "at sundry times, and in divers manners," Jesus Christ exercised sovereignty over death, in the case of others. But in the

III. Third place, his own resurrection constitutes the grand display of his triumph over death, and him that hath the power of death: and it is in the wisdom of God transmitted to

A a

us,

us, with a clearness and fulness of evidence that stops the mouth of infidelity. The certainty of Christ's death has never, that I know of, been called in question. The body hung lifeless on the tree, before the eyes of a great multitude, some of them deeply interested in the bloody catastrophe, and all deeply affected when the scene closed. The soldiers, men inured to the sight, and practised in the works of death, came to relieve agonizing nature by a finishing stroke, but "when they saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs, but one of them with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water;" a farther proof that he was actually dead. Neither could Joseph of Arimathea, nor Nicodemus, be possibly mistaken in this point, who wound the body in linen clothes, with spices, after the manner of the Jews, and thus deposited it in the sepulchre.

There is another circumstance worthy of attention, strikingly marked by one of the Evangelists. The body of Jesus was deposited in "a new sepulchre, wherein was never man
" yet

“ yet laid.” Whether, therefore, a resurrection actually took place, or an imposture had been committed, the glory or the infamy could attach but to one person. It was Jesus of Nazareth who, to the conviction of a cloud of witnesses, hung dead upon the cross; it was Jesus of Nazareth who, to the conviction of a cloud of witnesses, was consigned to a new tomb hewn out of a rock; it was he, and no other, who could be the object of attention, on this momentous occasion, to friends or to enemies. The former were either to enjoy the triumph of detecting a deception, while the others were to be covered with shame; or the disciples were to partake of the triumph of their risen and exalted Master, while his enemies should be confounded. Let us see in what manner both parties conducted themselves. The persecutors of Jesus Christ, while he yet lived, and after his death, did every thing that could be done to prevent or to expose imposture. In the wisdom of God they were permitted the full exercise of their sagacity, power and malevolence, and the solicitude which they expressed completely betrays the apprehensions that haunted them. They had but to remain quiet, and permit the pretensions

of "that deceiver" to demonstrate their own folly. They had but to sit still and smile at the fond credulity, zeal and attachment of the two counsellors, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. Whence comes this jealousy of twelve obscure, unconnected Galileans, one of whom had sold his master into their own hands, another had publicly denied him, and all of whom had forsaken him and fled? What, alarmed at the address or courage of a few females, whom every form of death is apt to intimidate! Ah, their own fears of the resurrection are much more powerful than the hopes of the disciples, or they never had made such an application as this to the Roman Governor: "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead. So the last error shall be worse than the first." Pilate grants them full permission to employ every precaution that they could devise for their security, and they availed themselves of it to the uttermost. "They went and made
" the

“ the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and
“ setting a watch.”

The incredulity, the dejection of the followers of Christ; their want of concert, of co-operation, form a complete contrast to all this. They are concerned only about their personal safety. They believed not the repeated declarations of their Master. They have given up the cause as lost. The women went early on the third day merely to *look at* the sepulchre, and some of them provided with “ sweet spices” that they might anoint the dead body of their friend, but without a ray of hope, that they were to pay him living honours. Two of the disciples went down that same day from Jerusalem to Emmaus, under a full conviction, that their expectations were groundless. To the risen Saviour himself, who joined them on the way, but whom in his present form they knew not, they sadly detail the story of Christ’s sufferings, and of their own despair. Their eyes being at length opened, they return in haste to Jerusalem to announce to the eleven what they had seen and heard, but “ neither believed they them.”

“ Afterward he appeared” personally “ unto
“ the eleven, as they sat at meat, and up-
“ braided them with their unbelief, and hard-
“ nefs of heart, because they believed not
“ them which had seen him after he was
“ risen.” One of them was absent at this
interview, and he resolutely rejects the joint
testimony of all his colleagues, witnessing the
fact : Armed at all points in the mail of in-
credulity he declares ; “ Except I shall see in
“ his hands the print of the nails, and put
“ my finger into the print of the nails, and
“ thrust my hand into his side, I will not be-
“ lieve.” What marks of collusion, then;
are here? Are these men qualified either to
undertake a bold enterprize, or to weave an
imposture? Were persons so simple, so timid,
so disunited, fit for storming a post guarded by
a band of Roman soldiers ; or for contriving
a tale which should pass upon the world, at a
period so inquisitive, so enlightened, and in a
spot, where all the sagacity, learning and
power were engaged on the other side? Of all
believers the infidel surely is the most cre-
dulous.

While

While such was the spirit, the views, the occupations of the opponents, and of the adherents, of the Lord Jesus, He was in supreme majesty fulfilling his own purpose and grace, in his own way, in defiance of the hostility of the one, and independent of all aid from the other. Where is the body of him, who was crucified, and which was deposited in the tomb? Let "the chief priests and " pharisees" exhibit it, if they can, in a state of death, after the third day, and for ever. Stop the mouth of silly women and credulous mechanics. Ah, they have been " kicking against the pricks," they have been contending with omnipotence, they have presumed to oppose human cunning to heavenly wisdom. What security is a cavern hewn out of a rock, a door of stone, a seal, and a watch, against the convulsion of " a great " earthquake," the might of an " angel of " the Lord," nay the almighty power of the Lord of angels?

But the appearances of Jesus Christ, " shew-
" himself alive after his passion," were nei-
ther few nor doubtful. By " many infallible

“proofs” he demonstrated the certainty of his resurrection from the dead, “being seen” of many witnesses “forty days,” and “speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” Let the Apostle of the Gentiles sum up the evidence for us. It stands on the sacred page: 1 Cor. xv. 3—8. “For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once: of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.” This is the testimony of one who once was a declared and furious enemy of the Christian faith, and who did all he could to destroy it; but who both in his opposition to it, and in his support of it, acted on principle.

Is it nothing, my friends—I was going to make my appeal to the enemies of Christianity—Is it nothing, that the truth of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus has been admitted by the not least enlightened part of mankind, and has maintained its ground, during a period of eighteen centuries. Is the extensively happy moral influence which it has been exercising during that period, upon the temper and conduct of them who believe it, to be accounted nothing? Is it nothing that so many myriads of human beings, through so many ages, have been cheered and comforted; have been stimulated to the performance of painful duty, have patiently supported painful suffering, have met the king of terrors with composure, with joy, animated with those prospects of immortality which the resurrection of Christ has disclosed to the enraptured eye? Is it nothing to see “ Rachel, weeping for “ her children, and refusing to be comforted “ because they are not” by an infusion of this precious cordial revived and strengthened? See, she rises from the ground, wipes away her tears, and is no more sad, because “ they “ are” with Christ, who “ will raise them “ up

“ up at the last day.” Is it nothing, when I am called to “ bury my dead out of my sight,” the son whom I loved, whom I instructed, whom I saw increased in stature, and in favour with God and man, all that parental partiality can picture; and whom I saw pale, and emaciated, and panting, and expiring—is it nothing to contemplate him “ entering into peace, resting” with the redeemed “ in their beds, walking in his uprightness,” while the flesh rests in hope? Is it nothing, under the pressure of affliction, the pressure of years, the decays of nature, the gradual and certain approaches of death, to be able to look up and say, “ I know that my Redeemer liveth,” He orders my lot, he sustains my drooping head? Blessed Jesus, “ Thou wilt shew me “ the path of life: in thy presence is fulness “ of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures “ for evermore.” Who is there in this assembly, that will not go home this evening with an impression more faint or more profound on his heart, in favour of moral excellence, with kinder affections, with a warmer disposition to what is good, with a more perfect resignation to the will of God, in proportion

portion as the truth of this great leading doctrine of the gospel has laid hold of his mind? May we all “be filled with peace and joy in “believing” it; and “rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the “end of our faith, even the salvation of our “souls.”

The doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus being established, and, blessed be God, it is “built upon a rock, and the gates of hell “shall not prevail against it,” then

1. Every other particular of the Gospel dispensation is confirmed; every article of doctrine, however sublime and mysterious, is rendered credible, is ascertained; and every other fact standing in connection with it is firmly supported. This is the key-stone of the arch, on which every other bears, which unites all to itself, and cements the several parts into one solid, harmonious whole. Take this away, and all is disjointed, enfeebled, falls to pieces. When, therefore, I meet in Scripture “things hard to be understood,” this shall resolve my doubts, and check my presumption:

presumption: "The Lord is risen; He is
"risen indeed." When I am "in heaviness
"through manifold temptations," when hope
languishes, and faith is ready to fail, I will
cast myself on this "foundation of God"
which "standeth sure:" Jesus died, and rose
again. For

2. The resurrection of Christ inspires the
purest and most exalted delight to the soul of
man, as constituting a proof of its immortality,
of a state of existence beyond the grave. The
mind is relieved from the depressing, the
dreadful idea of annihilation. The Saviour
passed from the cross to Paradise, carrying
triumphantly with him the companion of his
sufferings, while their bodies hung lifeless on
the tree. And the resurrection sensibly de-
monstrated that death is not the extinction of
being, but the transition from one state to
another; that He who exerted this divine
power, has the absolute disposal of man in
every possible mode of existence. But the
self same event opens a prospect the most me-
lancholy and overwhelming to every unre-
generated, unbelieving soul of man. Immor-
tality

talities open upon him in all its endless, hopeless misery; a “worm that dieth not; a fire that never shall be quenched,”—“Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” May Jesus deliver us all from the wrath which is to come.

3. The resurrection of Christ is the foundation of a doctrine peculiar to Christianity—the resurrection of the body. This was an idea so new to the learned Athenians, and, in their apprehension, so absurd, that “when they heard” Paul preaching in Mars-hill, “the resurrection of the dead, some mocked.” However the mind might have pursued its own future existence into invisible worlds, the future existence of the body was given up, or rather never thought of, by the learned and the unlearned, by the polished Greek and the rude Barbarian. The experience and history of mankind had furnished no ground whereon to rear such a fabric. The doctrine, as we hinted above, was indeed laid up in a sacred oracle delivered by Moses, but it was unknown to, or not understood by, the generality

even of the people to whom that oracle was committed, much more was it unknown to the rest of the world. It was reserved to the great Teacher to bring it to light, and to put the unbelieving Sadducees to silence, by referring them to what God said by the mouth of their great prophet, at the burning bush, concerning their venerable ancestors, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, who, dead to the world, all lived to God, in the whole of their human existence, in their body as well as in their spirit. And what but the belief of this made dying Jacob give it in charge to his sons, to bury him with his Fathers? What but this faith could induce Joseph to "give commandment concerning his bones?" But, Christians, the truth of the doctrine rests not merely on an ancient declaration in the writings of Moses, but on a fact of unquestionable authenticity, in the New Testament. That the dead are to be raised is a truth demonstrated, for Christ rose from the dead. And "if the spirit of him that raised up
" Jesus from the dead dwell in you; He
" that raised up Christ from the dead shall
" also quicken your mortal bodies, by his
" spirit

“ spirit that dwelleth in you.” “ Since by
“ man came death, by man came also the re-
“ surrection of the dead. For, as in Adam
“ all die, even so in Christ shall all be made
“ alive. But every man in his own order :
“ Christ the first fruits, afterward they that
“ are Christ’s at his coming.”

4. This suggests another interesting consequence of our Lord’s resurrection, constituting another doctrine peculiar to Christianity ; “ Unto them that look for him shall
“ he appear, the second time, without sin
“ unto salvation.” To this grand consummation the eyes of the Christian world are directed : “ He hath appointed a day, in
“ the which he will judge the world in
“ righteousness, by that man whom he hath
“ ordained ; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him
“ from the dead.” The end of this glorious manifestation is the most solemn and interesting : “ The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from
“ heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that
“ know not God, and that obey not the gospel
“ pel

“ pel of Jesus Christ ; who shall be punished
“ with everlasting destruction from the pre-
“ sence of the Lord, and from the glory of
“ his power ; when he shall come to be glo-
“ rified in his saints, and to be admired in
“ all them that believe, in that day.” Thus
great events past, look forward to great events
yet to come, and exercise a commanding in-
fluence over all the intermediate duration.
And thus the simplest dictate of conscience,
and the most sublime discovery of religion
point to one and the same object—“ Jesus
“ delivered for our offences, and raised again
“ for our justification,”—Jesus coming “ in
“ the clouds of heaven with power and great
“ glory.”

5. The resurrection of Christ, and the
glory which immediately followed, convey to
us some idea of a spiritual and glorious body.
He had given, before his passion, various ex-
hibitions of his power over the corporeal frame.
He fasted forty days and forty nights. He
walked on the surface of the waters. On
the mount of transfiguration “ his face did
“ shine as the sun, and his raiment was white
“ as

“ as the light.” But the sensible form of his body was still the same, and equally discernible from every other, whether at the marriage supper of Cana in Galilee, or in the agony of the garden of Gethsemane, in the splendour of Tabor, or the ignominy of mount Calvary. After the resurrection, his body assumes other properties, and exercises other powers. He becomes visible and invisible at pleasure. He changes place with the rapidity of thought. He is in the midst of the disciples, though the doors are shut. And yet it is not a spirit. “ Behold,” says he, “ my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. “ Handle me, and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.”— “ While they beheld, he was taken up, and “ a cloud received him out of their sight.” “ So also is the resurrection of the dead. It “ is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is “ raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it “ is raised in power: it is sown a natural “ body, it is raised a spiritual body. There “ is a natural body, and there is a spiritual “ body.” What a motive have we here,

men and brethren, to maintain a “ conversation in heaven, from whence we look for
“ the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ; who
“ shall change our vile body, that it may
“ be fashioned like unto his glorious body,
“ according to the working whereby he is
“ able even to subdue all things unto himself.”—“ Beloved, now are we the sons of
“ God, and it doth not yet appear what we
“ shall be: but we know, that when he shall
“ appear we shall be like him; for we shall
“ see him as he is.”

Thus have I endeavoured, through much weakness, and frequently in much fear and trembling, to adduce a series of evidence of the truth and divine original of Christianity, to which God himself still continues to give witness; evidence arising out of its spirit, its native tendency, and its blessed effects. I have attempted to shew; That the Gospel of Christ is the true and only religion of nature, as exhibiting the most satisfactory and consistent view of the character and moral perfections of the Supreme Being; as presenting the most universal adaptation to the faculties of the human

man understanding, and to the natural and reasonable expectations of the human heart, through the various changing scenes of the life which now is ; as the great interpreter of the mystery of Providence ; as the grand cement of human society ; and as the only satisfactory demonstration of the life and immortality after which we pant, and without which our present transitory, fluctuating, miserable existence were an enigma not to be resolved. How far I have succeeded it would ill become me to conjecture. But if any thing suggested in the course of these Lectures, has been so happy as to lay hold on the heart and mind of so much as one young person, in danger of being drawn aside by the error of the wicked one ; if any known truth has been set in a new light, recalled to the memory, or impressed on the heart and conscience ; if the religion of the blessed Jesus has been effectually recommended to the information, the esteem, the comfort of one precious soul, then an object has been attained, of more value than the discovery and conquest of a Continent. If we have failed, it is from want of ability, not

from the weakness of the cause, and the attempt is harmless though unsuccessful.

I feel it incumbent on me, before I descend from this place, thus publicly to express my humble and thankful acknowledgements to Almighty God, for his gracious support through the labours of the season; and the rather, that at one period they were threatened with interruption, if not final termination, by severe and dangerous bodily infirmity. Hitherto the Lord hath helped. May spared, prolonged life, and restored health be more zealously and affectionately devoted to his service.

To you, my friends, I stand deeply indebted, for attendance so regular, for attention so patient, candid and serious, and for encouragement so liberal and affectionate. May the bountiful Giver of all good recompense to you and yours, a thousand fold, in temporals and in spirituals, the kindness which ye have shewn to the preacher.

My particular thanks are due, to the Gentlemen who formed this design, from motives so

so laudable, and who have conducted it with so much wisdom, firmness, spirit and perseverance. O had the execution realized their conceptions, what a treasure would the world have possessed! But they have expressed their satisfaction in terms the most encouraging, and it becomes not me to undervalue, what they have been pleased to approve. May their zeal and industry in every good cause, be owned of God, and crowned with success, and may their labours of love for the benefit of others, be transformed into showers of blessings, to water and enrich themselves and their families.

Will my Brethren, in the ministry of the Gospel, be pleased to accept my warmest acknowledgements for their countenance, assistance and support, throughout the whole process of this undertaking? Their friendship has been so unfeigned, their co-operation so generous, their sympathy so truly Christian, that I must have a heart of marble not to feel, and feeling, not to express it. But in doing me honour, have they not discovered a spirit which reflects the highest honour on themselves?

selfes? A spirit exalted above all that is mean and selfish; a spirit that can rejoice in a brother's acceptance, and overlook a brother's infirmities. This accordingly strengthens the obligation laid upon me, and I trust I shall carry a sense of it with me to the regions of perfect purity and friendship. If our names shall descend to posterity, I shall deem it a high honour for mine to descend in such company. In the mean time, may the blessing of the most High God descend, and rest, on their persons, their families, and their flocks, to cause them to abound in every temporal comfort, and in all spiritual and heavenly attainments in Christ Jesus.

My Friends, we have a common debt of gratitude to discharge to the Rev. Dr. REES, and the Office-bearers of his Church, for granting us, in a manner so truly liberal, the use of this comfortable and commodious place, of worship. In your name and my own, render them sincere and hearty thanks; with kindest wishes, and fervent prayers for the continuance and increase of their union, comfort and prosperity. May grace, mercy and
peace.

peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, be multiplied to them, and to all who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth; and may the multitude of them that believe, be of one heart and of one soul.

If I have omitted the due acknowledgement of any person or circumstance, which ought to have been noticed, it proceeded not from wilful neglect, and will be, by the candid, imputed to human frailty, not to deliberate unkindness: if I have fallen into error, or been guilty of misrepresentation, the same candour, I trust, will be extended, when I solemnly declare, that, in no one instance, did I mean to deceive or to misrepresent,

Brethren, farewell. We are dropping each other by the way; but we are journeying to our Father's house, and shall arrive every one in his order. Let us not fall out by the way, but endeavour to render what remains of the road smoother, and more pleasant to each other, by looks, and words, and acts of mutual cordiality and devout affection. Let us make it appear that we believe the gospel, by breathing

ing its spirit, and by reducing its precepts into practice. He who doeth the will of God, the same shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God. “ And the peace of God, “ which passeth all understanding, shall keep “ your hearts and minds through Christ “ Jesus :” to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

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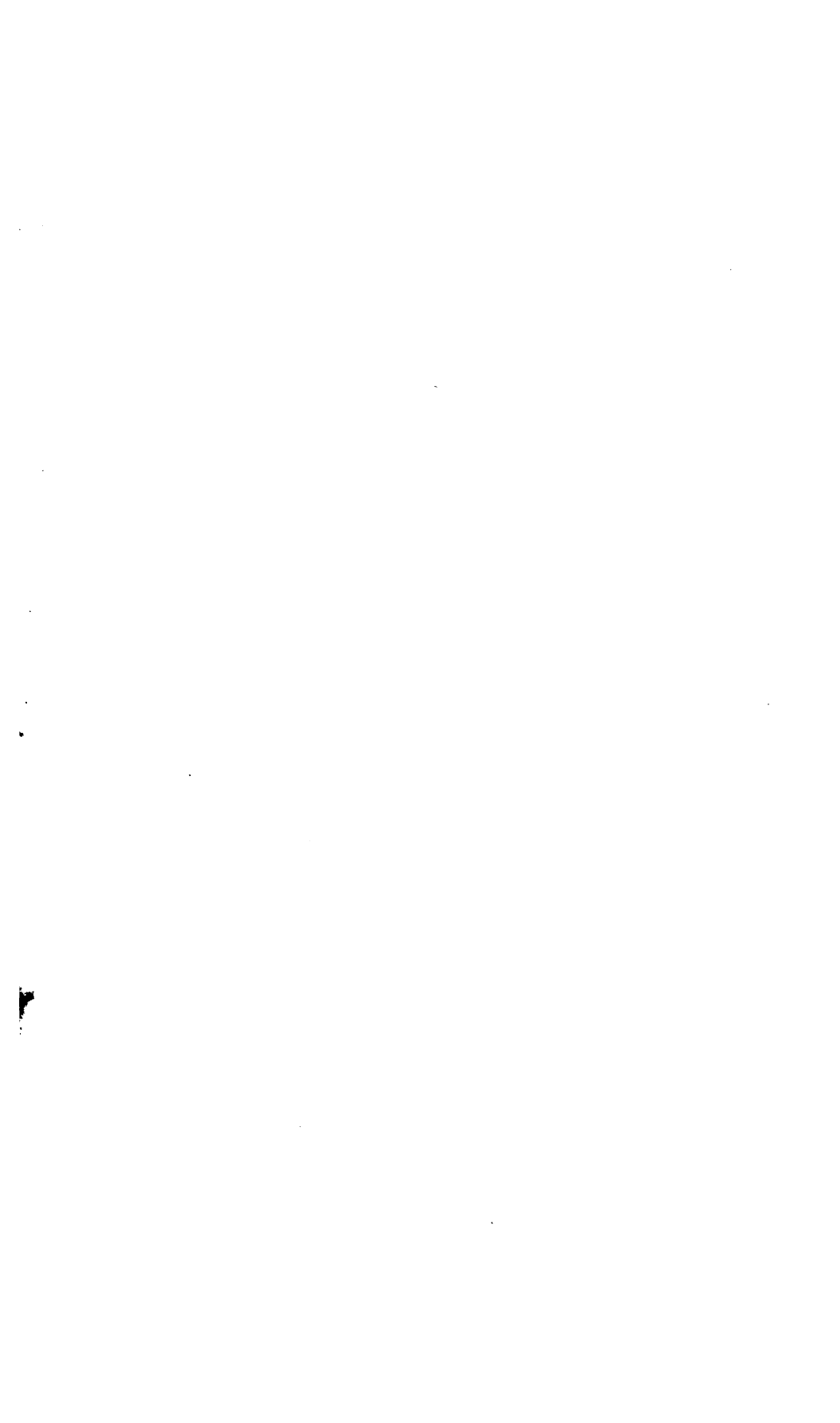
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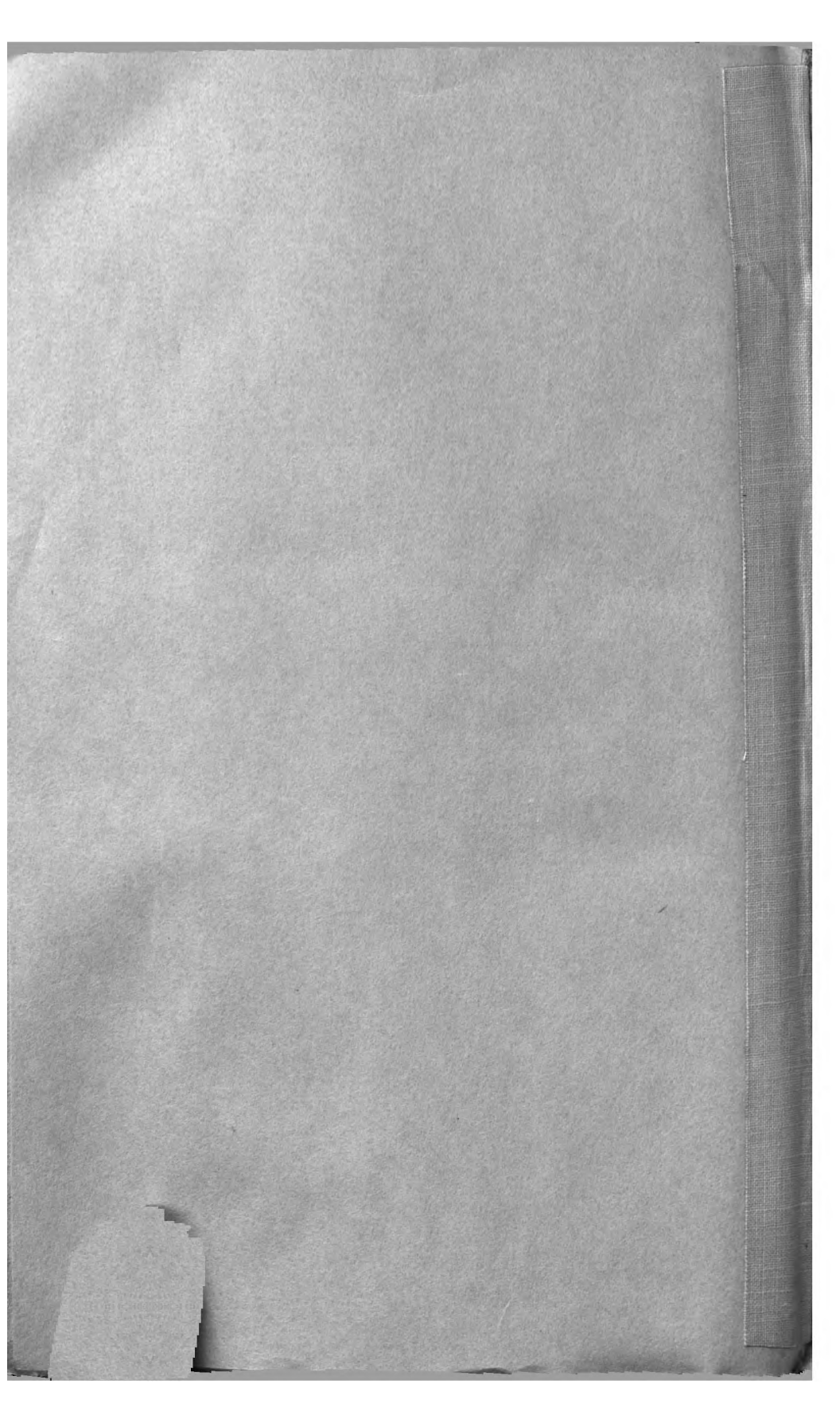
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